

CINEMA

MAY-JUNE 1992 NO. 38

Papers \$5

PAUL HENDERSON IN
BAG LEONARD'S
STRICTLY BALLROOM



AUSTRALIA AT CANNES: THE FILMS, THE FILMMAKERS
'STRICTLY BALLROOM' / 'DAYDREAM BELIEVER' / 'HAMMERS
OVER THE ANVIL' PLUS SATYAJIT RAY / WIM WENDERS

“GILLIES & COMPANY”

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Apart from the accolades brought to the Victorian film community with the local and international success of films like John Hume's *Death in Brunswick* and Jocelyn Moorhouse's *Priscilla*, the spotlight fell once again with *Vive Victoria*, a celebration which marked the anniversary of Film Victoria.

A gala evening at the Victorian Arts Centre Concert Hall marked off a week-long celebration that included retrospective screenings of major works Film Victoria have been involved in over the years, and culminated with a televised tribute on Channel 7.

The special night saw the screening of director Michael Pattinson and writer Jan Sardi's *Shoreline* (This was claimed to be a world premiere screening, but that had occurred in Santa Monica in February).

Appropriate for such events, the evening was opened by the Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Jim Kennen, and was hosted by local television celebs Helen Lee, Hahli Haines and Jennifer Kaye. On hand were Film Victoria's Chairman, John Howie, and Director, Jennifer Hooks, running through the achievements of the organization in the past decade and the challenges to be met in the future.

The champagne flowed and celebrated the evening, and so did antipathies from filmmakers of past and present generations - Fred Schepisi, Paul Cox, David Parker and Hahli Teet, Jocelyn Moorhouse - whose successes certainly would not have been possible without the support of Film Victoria.

JOCELYN MOORHOUSE (LEFT) AND JENNIFER KAYE, TWO OF THE YOUNG STARS OF VICTORIA AUSTRALIA'S MOVIES, POSE FOR AN AUSTRALIAN PRESSURE AS PART OF FILM VICTORIA'S FILM ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.

BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS

JURY PRIZES

Golden Bear, Grand Prix: Grand Canyon (American-German, USA)

Silver Bear, Special Jury Prize: Arles 1888, Orphee 1888 (Greek-German, Great Britain, Ireland, Greece, Hungary)

Silver Bear, Director: Jan Troell, for A Captains (Sweden-Finnish-Germany)

Silver Bear, Actress: Maggie Cheung, for Moon Ling (for Hong Kong)

Silver Bear, Actor: Armin Mueller-Stahl (for his UK-Germany-Italy)

Silver Bear, Cinematography: Peter Hill, for Redoubt (Spain)

Silver Bear, Outstanding Debut Film: La Penitence (The Penitent, Ricardo Larrain, Chile-Spain)

Alfred Bauer Prize: Initiative (Boris Gelfand, Russia)

Special Mention: Barbara Thurnham in *Gooden* (Germany)

Jury: Anja Ginter, Charles Champoll, Sylvia Chang, Jutta Kewel, Irving Kren, Wolfgang Klaus, Reinhold Lenz, Ralf Schlegel, Gerd Schlegel, Michael Verhoeven, Susanne York

PIRELLI PRIZES

International Film Critics Award: Dente d'Albero (Edo Gheer, France)

Young Critics: La Via dei Profeti (Ad Kozlowski, Poland) and *Edward e Derek* (Johan, UK)

Special Mention: Tyla Simon (Three Days, Sonja Botes, Lithuania)

FILM FUND UPDATE

The Australian Film Finance Corporation announced in February that applications for the Third Film Fund had been re-opened. Due to one of the six short-listed productions failing to attract the submissions were not accepted and some fifty projects were submitted.

The FFC has also announced that a Fourth Fund will be held in 1992-93. The FFC's Chief Executive, John Morris, said that the Fourth Fund would seek to have a mix of budgets, with up to five projects and an anticipated total budget of \$14 million. He indicated that \$4.5 million would be the maximum budget, although he hoped some of the projects would be in the \$2-2.5 million range. He emphasized that the FFC was adopting a flexible approach to the Film Fund to ensure the best scripts possible were accepted.

Morris expects that applications will be accepted from 1 to 30 September.

NEW SOUTH WALES FILM AND TELEVISION OFFICE

Sydney has just been confirmed as the 1994 venue for the annual Asian Pacific Film Festival. The Festival, which is held in a different country each year, was last held year in Taipei, where it attracted a television audience of 20 million.

This year the Festival is to be held in Seoul 1993 in Kyoto, before coming back to Sydney where it was last held in 1979.

The Sydney decision results from a pro-

CORRIGENDUM

Dear Sir,

I would like to draw your attention to a factual error in the article on Jewish Cinema (by Jan Epstein) published in the March 1992 edition of Cinema Papers.

This article mentions the film *The Gulf Streamers* and refers to the mayor that features in the film as Tommy Kolosik.

However, the mayor in the film was Chaim Lurid, the notorious mayor of Tel Aviv who was involved in controversy during the Gulf War, and who was included in the film for that reason.

Further to your information there is no mayor in Israel called Tommy Kolosik, but there is Teddy Kollek, the well-known mayor of Jerusalem.

Yours sincerely
Marique Schwartz
 Director/Producer
The Gulf Streamers

post delivered by the New South Wales Film and Television Office's Script and Prop Unit. Main again, John MacQuarrie McQuarrie says the NSWFTO has increasingly come to realise the need to develop Asia-Pacific relationships and believes the Festival, with its 400 delegates from all countries in the region, will be a great opportunity for filmmakers - and for Sydney.

The NSWFTO believes it is a natural partner for involvement with Asia. It has been increasing links with Japan over the past few years, and has begun to increase its contacts with Korea.

An NSWFTO initiative, the Festival has the full support of state and local governments, and is receiving generous and practical assistance from the Australia Film Commission.

PRODUCTION PACKAGE ANNOUNCED

Portman Entertainment, John Seaton Productions and Network TEN have put together a production and distribution package for six feature films to be produced in Australia, its the most significant Australia-UK partnership yet realised.

Vivian Glynn, Chief Executive of Portman, a leading UK independent production company, comments that:

Leading Australian writers have produced world class scripts for the internationally-recognised Australian directing teams and editors. Although low-budget, these are all high-quality psychological thrillers. The first two, each of *Pleasure* and *Choreographer*, will be distributed in Japan by Toho Motion Japan, a leading independent distributor and production company, which has a strong relationship with Portman.

Producer John Seaton says: 'These projects will offer exciting opportunities for Australia to be seen around the world, particularly in the emerging dynamic markets of Japan and Asia.'

Development of the series is being supported by the Australian Film Commission, the New South Wales Film and Television Office, Network TEN and Portman Entertainment. Network TEN will license the films in Australia and New Zealand. Budgets will average \$2.5 million.

10 February 1993

FEATURES

BOO BOO (100 mins) Ross Colangelo. Producers: Ross Colangelo. Writers: Spencer. Co-producers: Leo Pizzarello (Italy), Renato Cohen (Canada), Arthur Slyn (Japan). Director: Jim Kaufman. Writer: Ross Colangelo. A brilliant young politician and wise-crack, arrogant woman make a passionate pact to avenge the deaths of their love partners in this psychic sexual fantasy set against a stylish Italian backdrop.

DOCUMENTARIES

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE (90 mins) Barclay Productions. Producer: Mike Seaton. Director: Peter Du Cane. Writer: Mike Seaton. This documentary about the battle to save thousands of endangered species examines the work of international zoos and other organisations which have become redoubts. Mark's Arts, providing assistance for artists and a life-line for many rare species.

THE UNTOUCHED VIOLET (90 mins) Jupiter Film. Producer: John Tolson. Director: James Wilson. Writer: Nadine Aronoff. The extraordinary award-winning young artist (Aldagene) artist Gordon Bender. His paintings break away from established imagination concepts. The programme shows how his perspectives are shaped by many cultural influences in Australia and Europe.

PERSONHOOD'S JOURNEY (90 mins) Aural. Producers: Christopher Tuckfield. Petron L. Huaco. Writer-director: Christopher Tuckfield. A young girl and blind woman travel alone through Japan, communicated by an electronic system of touch. She has made several journeys before using this extraordinary way of 'telling' the world. Tackling the sensitive issue of cross-orientation, the documentary will examine Personhood's world and aimed on the nature of human communication.

THE KIDDO (10 x 30 mins) Kideo Productions. Executive producer: Rupert Gifford. Producer: Ian Irvine. Director: John Clark. Writers: John Clark, Deirdre Kruzevich. This television documentary programme for children aged 8-12 years provides general knowledge and science in an entertaining and humorous way. The series uses live young performers, knowledgeable clean-clothed Question men. The Empty Pockets comedy duo and Mr Robot, a globally-abled blindman. The *KidDO* encourages children to think for themselves, question everything and form their own views.

Since the previous Board meeting, following a special meeting of the PPC directors, the PPC has entered into contract negotiations with the producers of this proposal.

DRIVE RECONSTRUCT (100 mins) J. A. Buckler & Company. Executive producer: Richard Becker. Producers: Robert MacLennan, David Henry. Director: George Miller. Writers: Lucas Peters, David McGuire. Dramatic story of the ill-fated affair between an American Professor of Philosophy at an Australian university, and his 18-year-old student. An intense and intense love is directed when rape and sexual charges are laid.

THE HEARTBROKEN (100 mins) Vero Films. Producer: Bill Gaudin. Director: Michael Jettell. Writer: Richard Bennett. Nick is a Greek-Australian high-school student with ambitions to become a world class soccer player. Christine Papadopoulos, the attractive new Greek teacher, takes up the cause against the school's racist superintendent. Their liaison leads Christine to reassess her view of the cultural expression of her background in this heart-breaking, soap comedy set in Melbourne.

16 March 1993

FEATURES

THAT THE HILL SAT (100 mins) Entertainment Made Working Title Films. Producers: Peter Barry, Costello. Director: Christopher John Quinn. Writer: Jim Searns. When Dr Fleck's father plunges the car into a roadside river, the workshop and a killer. Things are hardly easy in the workshop. This film, based on a novel by Australian writer Tim Winton, is the story of the mercurial power of love and a young boy's vision of the supernatural world.

TELEVISION DRAMA

REUNION BORDER: THE GALAXY AND TURN LEFT (28 x 30 mins) Cinefilms Australia. Executive producer: Terry Gleeson. Producer: Jan Merrill. Director: Rod Hardy. Paul Holmes. Brendan Maher. Writer: John Forster. The Jackson family has come falling across the galaxy to Earth from the planet Zynper. They're in exile. The family is tightly bonded together. It is 12-year-old son who's having trouble fitting in. The hole of school thinks she's weird - and they're right.

DOCUMENTARIES

DISCOVERY (90 mins) Beyond Productions. Executive producer: Peter Abbott. Producers: Andrew Waterworth, Bill Banna. Co-directors: Bill Bennett. Information has become the lifeblood of the modern world. The systems of collection, analysis and transmission of electronic data have become the planet's nervous system. What evidence *Discovery* will show the viewer on a journey through the information technology web and beyond to discover who controls - what is power and what effect it will have on the future.

THE AVOCADO PLANTATION

Pan MacMillan Publishers Australia, a division of Pan Books (Australia) Pty Ltd, wishes to apologise to Mr Christopher Roache, the director of the Australian film *"The Thirteenth Floor"*, for statements concerning that film made in the book by Mr David Stratton, and published in the MacMillan Australia imprint, *"The Avocado Plantation"*.

Neither Mr Stratton nor Pan MacMillan Publishers Australia intended to imply there was any fault on the part of Mr Roache which caused the producers of the film *"The Thirteenth Floor"* to replace Mr Roache or incur delay and further expense in completing the film. Pan MacMillan Publishers Australia apologises for any contrary inference which might be drawn in this regard.

Australian Can

In many ways, *Cinema* represents a critical and cultural divide between those with a preference for mainstream American cinema, and with Australian film better copied to, and those who feel that a national cinema is made immeasurably richer by the efforts of those directors whose work explores to the full humanity and originality traditionally associated with festival work in *Cinema*.

Last year was a boom year for the latter school: *Twenty One* Monroes's *Proof* (Queenslander Rik Lindner) and Lin Kerley's *Hellfire on the River* (Fox) (the Gerda Regent) was considerable praise, the former also going on to commercial success back home. They are first features by filmmakers well attuned to the dark currents in styles of mature cinema. Their work is an effort from the film of the 1970s arrived at these films, are from the prevailing effects of Rex G. Hall, Charles Chomel and Raymond Longford.

This year, there is again a number of Australian films going to *Cinema*, some of which, often in modest settings. In many ways, these films represent the changing face of Australian cinema. They also reflect, in their very appearance and content, shared changes in film thinking.

For those readers less familiar with local scenes, there are four pointed (and interesting) ways of getting a film featured in *Australia*.

1. **THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION:** In the 1970s conditions, the AFC (and its predecessor, the AFAC) carried the torch of *Australia*. A quasi-government body, the AFC had the awesome responsibility of deciding what and who would be included in a feature film industry almost totally dependent on government subsidy. That

changed when the government altered the feature set and the financing passed into the hands of private and investment banks (to somewhat predictable results).

Whether intentionally or not, the government regained the benchmark by watching down the tax benefits, and by supporting feature film-making as the major contributor of destiny. In particular, it created the Australian Film Finance Corporation, a sort of the "Bank" (see below).

Inevitably, such changes altered the AFC's role and, in some ways, the AFC is still defining its new one.

Apart from a range of important cultural activities, and the support of short films and documentaries, the AFC has the benefit of low-budget (less than \$2 million) feature film-making. It rather fully funds such productions, or finances them as the principal partner in association with state funding bodies.

By concentrating in this area, the AFC has assured that new filmmakers are given that vital first go of making a feature. The results, while understandably mixed, are also startling. Apart from *Proof* and *Hellfire on the River*, there is Rex Agall's *Return Home*, Kerley's tonight's *Anger* (Kerley), Susan Murphy's *Don't Stop* (the other *Water* and *Linda* Helmer's *Broken My Way*, to name but a few.

If the one true axiom of the film industry is that a nation's cinematic culture is made vital by the number and talent of its young filmmakers, the AFC has succeeded admirably. The critical, and sometimes commercial, success of these films has been offset by many on a post-New Wave revival.

2. **STATE BODIES:** The state film-funding organizations, such as Film Victoria, the New South Wales Film and Television Office and



SENIOR DIRECTOR
AND CO-WRITER BAZ LUHRMANN
OFFERS SEVERAL THINGS (PAUL MERCURIO)
HE HADN'T EVER WON'T PUT IT TO THE TEST
BAZ LUHRMANN'S STRICTLY BALLROOM

Strictly Ballroom is a romantic comedy in the vein of the classic dance films of the 1940s. Set in the glamorous world of ballroom dancing, it is the story of a young man's struggle against the system.

Scott Hastings (Paul Mercurio) upsets the conservative elements of the Ballroom Dancing Federation by daring to dance his own steps. He is immediately dumped by his partner, Liz (Gle Cerdas), and his hopes of winning the Pan Pacific Grand Prix are dashed.

All seems lost when out of the shadows emerges Fran (Tara Morice), a beginner and the ugly duckling of the dance studio. An unlikely partnership is born, one the Federation is hell-bent on stopping. But can they?

Strictly Ballroom began in 1984 as a work-shopped piece at NIDA, when co-writer-director Baz

BAZ LUHRMANN'S

Strictly **Ballr**

DIRECTOR BAZ LUHRMANN
AND ACTOR PAUL MERCURIO
INTERVIEWED BY
RONNIE TAYLOR

Luhrmann was a student there. The play went on to a highly successful season at Sydney's Wharf Theatre. After another run at Expo in Brisbane, it went to Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, where it won Best Play and Best Direction at an international competition. The reviewer for *Vesernik* wrote that it was "an unforgettable artistic experience. Their performance was literally breathtaking. The ecstatic applause made the young artists return for many curtain calls."



oom

Strictly Ballroom

Luhrmann: "Ultimately, the film doesn't always happen, it's your beliefs."

The film was produced through M&A films, run by Trivium Mail and Ted Albert. Mail is an established documentary filmmaker, a former executive producer and general manager at Film Australia. While there, he executive-produced the tele-features *Classy* (Ian Murray, 1987), *Popular* (Bill Bennett, 1988) and *Midwinter* (Bill Bennett, 1988), and the documentary *Case Study: An Unnatural History* (Mark Lewis, 1987). Albert has a background in rock music.

Strictly Ballroom is the first feature from M&A and was partially financed by the PFC.

RAZ LUHRMANN

Raz Luhrmann made his acting debut opposite Judy Davis in John Duigan's *Witness of Our Dreams* (1981). Since then, he has been involved in many aspects of the film industry, from acting in film and television, to directing rock video clips and to directing, producing and performing in the Williams documentary, *Kids of the Cross*.

On graduating from NIDA, Luhrmann became Artistic Director of The Sydney Theatre Company's special licence musical projects. After the subsequent success of *Strictly Ballroom*, he devised and directed the award-winning *Lake Corbiar* for the Australian Opera. In 1990, he directed to great acclaim the Australian Opera's production of *La Bohème*. *Strictly Ballroom* is his first feature.

Strictly Ballroom was produced by M&A films. How long does the association go back?

About two years. It started when Ted Albert came to the second production of the play by The Sydney Theatre Company. Ted felt it would make a terrific film, which was great because I've always thought of it as a film from the beginning.

It was a very brave decision on the part of Ted Albert and Trivium. Mail to back someone who hadn't directed a feature before. It's not only a big leap to get a film up about ballroom dancing, but even more so to him a first-time director.

So art can triumph in Australia?

If it didn't, we'd all leave, wouldn't we?

Ultimately, the positive thing about this country, although it doesn't always happen, is that you can see, that you can actually stick to your beliefs.

What is the style of the film?

The "telling" style is the key thing. Some people may be shocked because it uses a structure utilized by many American films. A lot of those stories are about great myths, like the David and Goliath story of a young outsider trying to overcome a oppressive regime. That is a basic myth.

What's unique to this film is the way in which we've taken that myth and retold it. The film draws upon 1940s Hollywood musicals and is an amalgam of a lot of elements.

The thing about style, though, is that it exists, it's not something that you chase - that's selfish! The difference between the two is that one you set out to acquire, the other actually evolves.

What sort of music have you used?

The soundtrack is very eclectic, from 1940s 38-musical of Happy Feet and old jazz classics to contemporary pop, which musical



director David Hirschfelder has composed. He's probably best known for his work on the last two John Farnham albums. He has also done several mini-series.

I chose David because of his classical training, and his ability to produce pop tracks and scores for a musical soundtrack. I'm very happy with his work.

Was casting a dance film difficult?

Well, casting is always interesting, whatever you do. Madonna's now got the lead in *Disclosure*. Mary McCormack. I think Mary should have got it, but someone else might say, "No, Madonna's perfect for it." As with any decision in film, no one makes a casting decision, particularly a director, unless he or she thinks someone is best for the role.

I cast Gie Carides as Liz. Now Gie is naturally dark and from a Greek background, she is almost everything that this character Liz isn't. Liz is a blonde, blue-eyed and slightly fickle character. We I wanted to cast Gie because I felt she could create that role. And the transformation is remarkable.

Other than Paul Monaghan, who has an acting background but is primarily a dancer, just about everyone else is an actor first. I came down heavily on the side of acting.

One thing I'll tell you about Paul, and it's something I'm finding more and more, is that it's very rare for any performer in this country to work five days a week, every week of the year. Not in The Sydney Dance Company, where he's from, they're used to getting up every night in front of thousands of people. Even the best film actors only do two six-week shoots a year, certainly not every day.

Strictly Ballroom

When you're a freshman in the industry and you don't know the politics or the ins and outs of dealing with people, the strongest thing to go by is your instinct for personality. The chemistry of the two personalities is what's going to sustain you.

Quite often I find myself, not just in the film world but in the opera and theatre worlds too, working with people whom you want to kill. You want to physically beat them to death.

If someone is really opposed to you artistically and aesthetically, it won't work. If personally don't get on with someone, but their expertise is such and they're genuinely going in the same direction, that's number one above everything else.

What I'm interested in is to be taken in different directions by people. The job of a director, ultimately, is to synthesise many points of view into a singular direction, so that you're making a very fine line with a great many elements. Whether someone is right for the job or based on the fact that they're so passionate about making the end product as you are.

What about director of photography Steve Mason?

The great thing about Steve is that not only is he brilliant with natural light—which was advantage—he's a nice person as well. No matter what time at Steve, he came up with a solution. You can't underestimate what that means to a director. Steve's teamed with Johnny Seale and that's rubbed off. There were some shots that would have taken other DOPs all day, but Steve did them in two hours!

There are lots of pressures, but at the end of the day you want image poetry.

What are your hopes for the film?

That *Strictly Ballroom* will be a success and that Australians in particular will come to see it, because it is about Australians. Everyone booed Scott Hastings out of the race, but he came back as an outsider and won!

PAUL MERCURIO

Mercurio started training as a dancer at the age of nine and eventually left school to take up a full-time ballet scholarship with the Western Australian Ballet Company. From there, he was accepted into the Australian Ballet School.

Today, Mercurio is one of Australia's best dancers and choreographers, and has been performing with The Sydney Dance Company since 1988.

His principal works as a dancer include *The Selfish Giant*, *Some Rooms*, *After Versailles* and *King Roger*, and as a choreographer *Dancing with Jand*, *Wasting*. Other highlights include the acclaimed BBC production of *Cat*, and *In the Company of Women*.

Strictly Ballroom is his first feature.

Had you done much acting before *Strictly Ballroom*?

It was mainly theatre. I had some big roles in a few plays. There was a woman called Helen O'Grady who had a whole show in Perth. She used to come and teach us, and we'd go onto her show and do student scenes. It wasn't films, more television and chat.

With film, you're always aware of the camera; it's a right in front of your face. When you're trying to do a very intimate scene, and there's a huge beam whizzing past your head, it can be difficult.

On stage, you usually have enough space to stay in your own little world. You can choose to play out beyond the proscenium, if you want. With a camera close by, you can't.

How did you get the part in *Strictly Ballroom*? Did your agent call?

No, I didn't have an agent!

Ben approached me about eight or ten months before he cast me to explain the film and the style. After seeing *Cat*, the dance I created with Kim Walker, Ben wanted me to choreograph his film. After a later, he rang me and, 'This looks like we've got the money. Will you come and read for me?' So I did. Six months later, he did more casting, and then offered me the role. That's when I got an agent!

What attracted you to *Strictly Ballroom* from a dance point of view?

Initially, the idea of ballroom dancing was a bit threatening because it's not a style I got off on. I was nervous and scared of looking stupid in some of the Latin styles. Some of the competitions are more famous for what they haven't got on than what they have!

The prospect of doing flamenco was the main attraction. I've had fantasies of living in Spain and becoming a flamenco artist! So, I've had a bit of a fantasy fulfilled in this film.

I've never thought of myself as a big 'hip mover'. I'm trained classically, where you hold everything from the belly button up. When you move, it's out the ball of your foot. In ballroom dancing, everything moves from the legs down; your upper body hardly moves. It's all hips, knees and ankles.

How much of Scott Hastings is Paul Mercurio?

It wasn't hard for me to understand Scott. He's a little bit of a rebel trying to do it his own thing, develop his own style, follow his own creative instinct. It's a good role for me. It didn't require a great personality change. For a film film role, I've been very lucky.

Learning ballroom was the challenge; learning flamenco was the reward. But I paid for it! Two weeks before shooting began, I was in Antonio Vagan's studio rehearsing flamenco. I was wearing Cuban-heeled flamenco boots and doing double heel jumps when I landed straight-legged and twisted my ankle. There was internal bleeding up to the knee. It was a bit ugly and probably the worst injury I've ever had. I've broken both my feet, but this injury was worse. I was on crutches for nine days and made a lot of potato pastiches to get the swelling down.

How do you think a camera can help choreography and dance?

You need to choreograph with the camera. There are times when you can just lock the camera off and dance within its frame, then you can up a bit. If you go for close-ups and detail, you can lose a lot of the movement. If you try and travel with movement, you make the dancing look still and, if that's not the effect you're after, then you're working the dance. It has to be a mutual relationship.

In the stylised Hollywood numbers, whom are you influenced by?

Gene Kelly. I'd like to thank I brought a touch of Gene Kelly to the film. Fred Astaire was pretty amazing when he did, but Gene had faith, though not real faith you could see. He was really insecure about it, but still a human being. I feel more compassion towards Gene Kelly than Fred Astaire. This film's got a bit of both.

What is the appeal of this film to you?

Ballroom crosses so many boundaries of class and culture. I think the audience base will be broad. It's going to be great for dance, in that it has ballroom style, flamenco and contemporary dance. In that sense, it's not strictly ballroom. And that's the point of the film really—it's not just about ballroom dancing, it's a film about a set of wonderful characters, juggling with life.

Being in this film has helped me realise the possibilities of combining dance and film, my two favourite mediums. I'd love to continue in that vein. Baz and Mika films have done a terrific job; they had a vision. You should come and see it.

films from

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Australian Film Commission
SYDNEY LONDON MELBOURNE

AUSRAHA

RECENTLY, SEVERAL OTHERS IN
THE REGIONAL AND COUNTRYSIDE AREAS
WENT TO THE BATTLEFIELD MONUMENT
(BATTLEFIELD MONUMENT) AND THE BATTLE
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ANN TURNER'S

ammers over the Anvil

Andrew L. Urban



Alan Marshall could have called it "Grace, Alan and East", after the three central characters, but he wrote his story with the moral very much in mind. Like a horseshoe that's hammered over an anvil, the blows that life deals us make us stronger — or destroy us.

It is a theme not too dissimilar from that in his popular story, "I Can Jump Puddles", and is again told through the eyes of a young boy.

Grace McAlister and her husband are English gentry, a childless couple gently roaming the world to satisfy Grace's restless spirit. They end up in a big house in a small community in the South Australian bush. There she causes a terrible stir by having an affair with the local horse breaker, East (Russell Crowe). He becomes the hero figure for a crippled, motherless young boy called Alan (Alec Oulford) and it is not Grace's eccentric old husband who proves to be the problem, but Grace's conscience.

When she tries to leave and end her affair with East, it leads to a tragic accident. Grace, for the first time in her life, takes direct responsibility for her actions.

When it came to adapting the story, the film's makers had to first solve the casting riddle of Grace. Producer Ben Cusson explains, "She had to be English and beyond child-bearing age, but she also had to be extremely attractive and around, so that her relationship with East would be workable."

Hammers over the Anvil



ABOVE: GRACE KELLY AND ALAN; BELOW: GRACE KELLY AND EAST BEACH. HAMMERS OVER THE ANVIL

To say the choice was limited would be an understatement, and casting Charlotte Rampling as Grace was more or less unavoidable, although it was by no means a foregone conclusion. Rampling had withdrawn from filmmaking, choosing herself in the peace of her large home in Paris with her husband, Jean Michel (Jarré, ever since making *Paris By Night* [David Hare] three years ago). She felt the need to take stock.

I was playing with fire, just a bit too much. It was becoming more and more difficult to get back to some kind of semblance of reality after filming. I would put myself too much into another made, and I needed to myself work out how it would be easier, because it was causing me too much difficulty and suffering.

Dark Begonia, with whom she co-starred in that remarkable late 1974 drama, *The Night After* (Liliana Cusani), has said of Rampling that she was one of those actresses capable of being a character, not just acting it. Was that it? She nods and grins wryly.

That was the problem. And I thought to myself that if there were other ways to act, I must try to find out if they're possible for me. I found that it's not really possible, but it's just... I have to find different techniques to protect me, that's all.

Rampling was attracted to the film by the well-crafted screenplay and by the character of Grace McAlister.

She's a woman over 40, she hasn't had children, she's married somebody whom she's obviously terribly fond of, but who is a rather eccentric older man. When she meets up with him, at first it's a very physical passion, then it becomes something else by the end. And then when terrible things happen as a result, she has to accept what she has brought about, and makes a very brave decision.

Director Alex Turner, whose debut feature, *Gela*, so impressed *The Guardian's* Derek Malcolm that he announced it was the most promising new work from Australia in a long time, overrode the original screenplay by Peter Hapworth, and made some special adjustments for Rampling. Gannon and Turner were both excited when Rampling accepted. Gannon says, "Charlotte has a slightly exotic quality which is unique and it works brilliantly."

Turner, thrilled when she heard of Rampling's acceptance, says, "She's always been a favourite... the key scenes are working just as I imagined them. There's chemistry between her and Russell, and that's just something you had to guess."

But if casting Grace was demanding, casting Alan, the young crippled boy, was crucial. Turner searched all over Australia for someone who could not only play scrapple, but who was the exact right age. Turner says, "He sees a highly charged sensual world and is on the cusp of realising what it is."

Turner and Gannon found 14-year-old newcomer Alexander Outhred, who has had no acting experience, but quickly acquired it on location—and enjoyed the process, and found it instructive. With his understanding, he managed to continue his more formal education, too.

Turner's vision of the film dramatically altered the original version, where the original script had a Disney family movie feel, as Gannon puts it. Turner gave it a grittiness which appealed to him. It was dark and complex, and charged with sexuality. Turner elaborates.

I saw it always aimed at adults. It's gritty look, not a soft look, and we're using special lighting and exposing the film in a special way—I wanted a "Moulin Rouge" feel to it, with rich colours—I am making a sensual film.

Turner, wary of luxury between shots, informed and overuse, thought the film was more or less set. The logistics of a difficult shoot are additional burdens to the dramatic and creative ones. As Gannon points out, even with a \$4 million budget, it is a tight affair.

The seven-week shoot in South Australia's wine district was very complicated. There was hardly time for wine tasting. ■



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Kathy Mueller's *D*

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REPORT
BY
EVA
FRITZMAN

Since the much-vaunted renaissance of the Australian film industry in the 1970s, female directors have sought to make their mark in the male-dominated enclave of filmmaking. Gill Armstrong first rattled the status quo with her first feature, *My Brilliant Career*. However, it has been during the second spasm of creativity in the late 1980s that women have made significant inroads into filmmaking in this country. Directors such as Jane Campion and, more recently, Jocelyn Moorhouse have explored the parameters of female experience on screen and have made startling, innovative films that have travelled beyond native shores. Kathy Mueller hopes now to join their ranks.



Daydream Believer

Since graduating from the Sundance Film and Television School in 1985, Mueller has been quietly making a name. In 1986, her powerful film *Easy Day, Easy Night*—about the psychological war wounds of a Vietnam War veteran—successfully travelled the international film circuit, winning a host of prizes, most notably the Grand Prix at the Montreal Film Festival. Since then she has worked principally in television: The 16-week ABC tele-series *Breaking Up and Sleeping* (1987), the mini-series *Tracy* (1988), *Stinger* (1987) and the six-part *The Magnitude* (1989), for which she received much praise. There is also the acclaimed children's series, *The Girl From Tomorrow*, and the psycho-sexual tele-series, *Use 64*. And now Mueller is about to release her first feature, *Daydream Believer* (formerly *The Girl Who Came Last*).

Daydream Believer, written by Samrat Rosenberg, was one of the few films financed by the NYC Film Fund in 1989. It opens on an outlandish premise: Nell Taccorita (Mira Sorvino), an aspiring actress, believes she is a horse. Abused by her father, who used to lock her in the room as a child, Nell sought refuge in the gentle company of horses. As a result, during times of stress, Nell resorts to braying like a horse and a riding posture and whinnies that perplex the people around her. Nell, who is essentially a loner, lives with the misanthropic and sexually adventurous Woody (Gus Clark). In contrast, Nell is naive and sexually inexperienced on account of the fact that she has been away with her wildly behaviourist—that is, until she meets and falls in love with Digby (Marlon Kempi), a wealthy rock promoter whose disastrous attempts at seduc-

Daydream Believer



OTTO (MIRANDA OTTO) AND NEIL IN A FURTHER, ANOTHER SCENE.

ing are ruining his fortune.

Musler describes *Daydream Believer* as a romance for comedy which gestures in many directions. "There's a lot in it, in the way of humor—There's burlesque, farce, some black comedy and much gentle whimsical humor."

The film also glimpses at more poignant issues. Says Musler: "It's not a happy film but it has much in it, and that much is quite heavy. It's about a girl searching in being a horse, about how people revert to what they were raised as. It's a film that deals with being oppressed, about how people can become dysfunctional as animals says. Neil needs to be a horse, it's that animal in her that allows her to survive. A horse represents freedom of spirit, the part of her that cannot be tamed."

According to actress Miranda Otto, who plays Neil, there is a great deal going on beneath her character's quirkiness.

Neil is a loner. She isn't used to people and finds it hard to be intimate with them. She also thinks she's a horse. — Well, she doesn't think she's a horse, it's just that she has that side to her which she withdraws into when she becomes threatened.

The film also charts Neil's sexual growth. Locked away from society, the character of Neil is very pure. Says Musler:

It is also a journey of sexual innocence. Neil is a complete innocent caught in a sexual wilderness. She ends up working as a

male strip show, which is very frightening for her because it's about male sexuality and she hasn't dealt with that yet.

It's a very challenging film because it deals with sexuality and the fear of sexuality. It is, I might add, also very funny.

According to Musler, it is precisely the blend of humor and the more complex questions about identity which make the film work.

The film deals with a psychological issue but it doesn't do it in a heavy handed, sugar-riddled way. But if you don't get things in level of humor, you drag people down. So, it must be a delicate balance.

Neil is Miranda Otto's second major role, after playing the lead in *Emma's War* (Clytie Jessup, 1988). She has subsequently appeared in Gillian Armstrong's *The Last Days of Chen Xiang* and Bob Elms' *The Newcomers* (Rid).

According to Musler, the search for the female lead was an arduous one, with no less than 200 girls being auditioned before Otto was cast.

The key was finding someone with great innocence, so that the audience would believe Neil had's quite integrated himself into the world. Miranda was absolutely right for the role. She has an innocence and purity that was just what we wanted.

As for the role of Digby, the wealthy rock promoter, the search went under to Los Angeles and London. When Musler met Martin Kemp, the founder of the rock group Spandau Ballet who appears in the film *The Edge* (Peter Medak, 1994) with twin brothers Gary, she knew she had found her Digby.

We'd do three scenes when we were going to get for the role until we saw Martin and went, "Oh, that's Digby." At that point, in the script Digby was a obscure entrepreneur. The minute I met Martin and found he was a little laid back, I thought, "Let's change it to rock and roll and everything will fall into place."

Musler cites Kemp's charisma as part of his appeal as Digby. "Martin is the first person I've seen upstage an animal. He's so magnetic on screen. Hardly anyone can upstage an animal, but he's done it."

Defying the old Hollywood axiom which cautions against working with children and animals, the film requires the actors to work closely with horses over the period of the eight-week shoot. According to *Daydream Believer*'s producers, Ben Gannon, the horses were the most difficult aspect of the filming. Both Otto and Kemp spent a great deal of time with horses, learning to ride and dealing at ease around them. There were five months of horse training involved and a complex polo match scene to shoot. Explains Gannon:

The horse masters [Emma and Murray Gannon] were exceptional. Everything worked. We didn't have mishaps on any scene.

On the day you'd think the horses might want to do something new, no, they'd get bored. We soon realized horses won't do multiple takes. So we had to get the actor's performance right, then quickly bring in the horses.

Musler believes *Daydream Believer* is his most challenging project to date. "It touches an area that has always interested me. The film deals with a dysfunctional human being. There's plenty of an animal, but none of us admits it."

1. Though made in 1985



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DAY OF THE DOGS

Director: James Kirkham. **Producers:** David Rapaport. **Executive producers:** Paul D. Harrison. **Screenwriters:** James Kirkham. **Based on the novel:** *Day of the Dogs* by Arthur Heller. **Director of photography:** Jeff Michael. **Production designer:** Bob Ricketson. **Editors:** Christopher Cardenas. **Sound recorder:** Kim Lord. **Composers:** Mike Glickson. **Costs:** John Moore (Doug Daniels), David Ngomangama (Perry Boy Floyd), Jaylene Kelly (Polly Young), John Hargreaves (Detective Maxwell), Renee Blango (Perry), John Haskopis (Mrs. Daniels), Jack Charles (Camp), Judith Margery (Wilkes/Mama), Michael Watson (Phlegm), Arlie Ousleyko (Silver).

Synopsis: A young, alcoholic ex-convict is torn between the bad influence of old friends, the love of a woman and the threat of guilt if he returns to his old ways.

DAYDREAM BELIEVER (aka THE GIRL WHO CAME LATE)

Director: Kelly Mullen. **Producers:** Ben Gannon. **Screenwriters:** Saturday Rosenberg. **Director of photography:** Andrew Lomon. **Production designer:** Roger Ford. **Costume designer:** Roger Ford. **Editors:** Robert Gibson. **Sound re-**

corder: Garin Sica. **Composers:** Todd Hunter, Johannes Pigott. **Cost:** Meredith Ott (Nelli), Martin Kemp (Hugh), Anne Lacey (Margo), Alison Smart (Rox), Lisa Carls (Mandy), Bruce Venzke (Ste).

Synopsis: The story of a loving, stable relationship and how to get one.

RIGHT BALL

Director: Ray Argall. **Producers:** Timothy White. **Executive producers:** Jill Rolfe, Bryan Maxwell. **Screenwriters:** Ray Argall, Harry Birchman. **Director of photography:** Marv Walker. **Production designer:** Keith Holmes. **Costume designer:** Jane Hyland. **Editors:** Ben Sullivan. **Sound recorder:** Ian Gergen. **Composers:** Philip Jackl. **Cost:** Matthew Fargher (Charles), Angie Williams (Julie), Paul Stern (Russell), Lucy Sheehan (Jacqui), Frankie J. Holden (Mia), Matthew Kirk (Douglas), Ollie Hall (Elgie), Desmond Kelly (Bert).

Synopsis: Charlie is a young accident with seemingly everything going for him.

Russell, the complete opposite, has just been released from prison. Their paths cross when Russell is employed to work on Charlie's latest project, the construction of a giant blenny rock as a tourist attraction for a small Victorian town.

EXCHANGE LIFEGUARDS

Director: Markie Murphy. **Producers:** Phil Arden. **Associate producer:** Donna Stoly. **Screenwriters:** Phil Arden. **Director of photography:** Martin McGrath. **Production designer:** Richard Hobbs. **Costume designer:** Jenny Campbell. **Editors:** Allan Trout. **Sound recorder:** Bob Clayton. **Composers:** John Capric. **Cost:** Elliott Gould, John McEldown, Christopher Adams, Ben Carter, Mark Henderson, Christopher Pate, Lois Larkins, John Logan, Vanessa Steele, Amanda Newman Phillips, Elizabeth Melver.

Synopsis: Bobby McGee, the environmentally-conscious son of an American developer, finds himself on an Exchange

with a girl in a hotel. They are in a room with a view of the sea. The girl is a blonde and the boy is a dark-skinned man. They are both in their late 20s or early 30s. The boy is wearing a dark jacket and the girl is wearing a light-colored dress. They are both looking at each other. The boy is smiling and the girl is looking at him with a serious expression. The room has a large window with a view of the sea. There is a bed in the background and a desk with a lamp. The lighting is soft and the overall mood is romantic.





Lifeguard programme. Not knowing what to expect, he arrives via a two-day out-ride to an isolated Australian coastal fishing village called Muller Beach. The local surf club, fighting for survival, hopes that Robby will help rescue them from the imminent takeover by the nearby and wealthy rival Red Beach club, which is owned by an International Consortium.

FATAL BOND

Director: Vincent Minton. Producer: Phil Arden. Associate producer: Guy Hamilton. Screenwriter: Phil Arden. Based on the story *Kilobeggs*. Director of photography: Ray Newman. Production designer: Keith Halkings. Costume designer: Lyn Johns. Editor: Ted Chao. Sound recordist: Bob Clayton. Composer: Art Phillips. Cast: Linda Blair (Leonardova), Jessica Eklund (Joe T. Martinez), Stephen Leacock (Anthony Roan), David Gibson (Ricky), Joe Fegner (Shamus Miller), Gus Leshman (Detective Chinski).

Synopsis: Joe and Leonard, drawn together by fate, set off to Springside to begin a new life. Two murders happen on their way. The father of one of the suspects, Anthony Roan, tracks the suspects, Joe and Leonard.

GARBO

Director: Ron Colth. Producer: Hugh Rafe. Associate producers: Neill Glanville, Stephen Kennedy. Line producer: Margot McDonald. Screenwriter: Patrick Cook, Stephen Kennedy, Neill Glanville. Director of photography: Geoff Burton. Production designer: Richard Bell. Costume designer: Ross Cheng. Editor: Neil Thompson. Sound recordist: John Phillips. Composer: Alan Zemel. Cast: Stephen Kennedy (Garbo), Neill Glanville (Neill), Max Cullen (Wall), Simon Gubers (Detective), Gerard Kennedy (Trevor), Moira Sullivan (Freddie), Imogen Anselmy (Jana), John Brumpton (Troy), Helen Canning (Cousin Elsie), Michael Trench (Town clerk).

Synopsis: Garbo is the story of two very unlikely garbage men seeking love and justice in an inner-city suburb of Melbourne. Their quest leads them through love, infatuation, physical abuse, madness and mystery, until finally justice is done.

GREENKEEPING

Director: David Casar. Producer: George Ryan. Screenwriter: David Casar. Director of photography: Simon Smith. Production designer: Berith Hakman. Costume designer: Tina Schofield. Editor: Mark Perry. Sound recordist: Lisa Egan. Composer: David Bradie, John Phillips. Cast: Mark Little (Kenney), Lisa Binsley (Joe), Max Cullen (Tom), Syd Casabian (Milton), Gus Corbitt (Gina), Rob Steele (Manager), Leigh Russell (Dore), Rosalind Murrey (Ricky), David Winkham (Trevor), Frank Whitten (Dad), Robyn Nixon (Mimi).

Synopsis: A film about sex, drugs and love in suburbia.





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New Australian

SOURCES AND PARALLELS IN AMERICAN AND

Brian McFarlane and Geoff Meyer*

By now the new Australian cinema's progress – through the 'ocker' conservatism and useful literary adaptations of the 1970s to the blockbuster-oriented thinking of the 1980s and its consequent conservatism – has been pretty thoroughly discussed. There have been chronological and thematic, industrial and critical, accounts of these crucial years in the building of an Australian cinema. And what "Australian cinema" might mean remains as elusive as ever. Does it mean a sturdy industry turning out a regular stream of marketable products? Is it a cinema which can compete internationally with what is being produced in other English-speaking (or, for that matter, non-English-speaking) countries? Does it refer to a body of work which represents aspects of recognisable Australian experience in terms of narrative cinema? How does it accommodate what a recent writer has called "the paradox that for a cinema to be a totally popular one must also be international in scope?" One of the functions of *New Australian Cinema* is to try to place new Australian cinema in contexts which may help to illuminate its nature as an art form and, to a lesser extent, as an industry.¹ [..]

The book aims to consider the feature-film revival of Australia in the 1970s and 1980s in relation to two comparisons which may shed light on its nature as an art form and/or as an industry. First, we want to consider the persistence of the Hollywood narrative model. By this we mean those formal and thematic paradigms that have been identified and explored by film scholars such as David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson.² Our concern is to trace ways in which the conventions of classical Hollywood narrative cinema have become inflected in their translation to the Australian cinema, while still showing the profound influence of their American prototypes. The success of our interest in British cinema somewhat differs. We do not mean to suggest that British cinema had no formal effect on new Australian cinema. In its refusal to carry through the melodramatic implications of its narratives, in its rejection of traditional closure, in the way the dividedness of its characterisation cut its plot narrative down, there is ample suggestion of its contrary.

Above all, though, it seems to us that an interesting, perhaps illuminating, parallel can be drawn between what may now be seen as two 'boom' periods that is, between Australian cinema of the 1970s and 1980s, and British cinema of the 1940s and 1950s. Given that both were, in turn, dissenting reflections of the classical Hollywood cinema, both were equally strikingly cases of English-speaking cinema striving for and, in a limited sense, achieving a sense of national identity. At no other time, certainly not in the history of the talking film, has either British or Australian film established such impressive claims to be taken seriously.

[The] nature of our interest in the comparisons, in the contextualising exercises, is different in each case. It is not that we regard the formal and the ideological/cultural as totally discrete categories; rather, it is a question of emphasis. By the formal aspects of Hollywood cinema, we mean such matters as the following: its structural properties as a purveyor of pictorial

narratives (including its use of parallelism and contrast, repetition and variation); its continuity editing (and the so-called 'invisible' or 'zero' style in which this plays an important role); its pre-occupation with the individual character, causally-connected narrative (in which, for example, camera movements and elements of mise-en-scene are dramatically motivated); its firm sense of closure. These formal aspects have progressively been treated as – as they had British audiences of the 1940s and 1950s – to what cinema is that it would require a much more revolutionary approach than either British or Australian has ever shown to challenge such models. Where these two cinema have diverged from classical Hollywood, it has not always been in their interests [...]

CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

The Hollywood narrative style is synonymous with the classical narrative system, even if there is an inherent danger in reducing a cinema that produced more than 15,000 feature film between 1915 and 1960 to a single narrative paradigm. However, the basic principles of the classical narrative – the emphasis on continuity, motivation, goal-oriented protagonists, and the consistent narrative form that underwrites spatial and temporal considerations to the demand for narrative logic – characterise the great bulk of Hollywood film, particularly those that are commercially successful [...]

The Australian film industry, at least since the second decade of this century, has, like other small national cinemas, sought to distinguish itself from the Hollywood cinema whilst remaining commercially viable. Most Australian films are also produced within the context of the classical system and the melodramatic tradition, although there are notable variations in the way these narrative and cinematic principles are used. [...]

The popularity of American film on the British market, argued Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "was never just economic": the "last reason for Hollywood's dominance was artistic and cultural". The same argument also applies to Australia. The commercial appeal of the classical cinema resides in its ability to emotionally involve a large number of people. This is partly achieved through character-centred, goal-oriented stories, but it is also a product of the specific narrative process that encourages the narrative formation of hypotheses concerning future developments, hypotheses that are emotionally based on audience expectations that have been formed, or learned, through repetitive narrative conventions. Confronted to these expectations is the role of the climax, the emotional and/or physical/visual moment within the narrative structure that occurs just prior to the resolution. The Australian cinema in the 1970s and 1980s [...] is characterised in a great many cases by its inability, or refusal, to exploit or develop these crucial aspects of the classical cinema. [...]

AUSTRALIAN CINEMA SINCE PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

A continuing debate within the Australian film industry, particularly since the critical acclaim accorded *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir, 1977), has focused on the type of films the industry should be producing and how to compete with foreign, notably

*Editor: This article is selected from extracts from the same-led book to be published by Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.

Cinema

BRITISH CINEMA

Hollywood, film. Often the terms of the debate have been constrained within an artificial dichotomy: an 'indigenous', low-budget, 'non-verbalist' cinema versus a 'pseudo-American', international cinema. Marcus Breton, in his review celebrating the *Australian Film Review House* (Ray Argall, 1988), provided a representative example of this limited context invoked by this 'debate':

There's an historical fact this seems to be: have been grossly overlooked in the current Australian press/capacity with making films for the international market. These often formulaised films made for the lucrative but unrepentable American public fail because they do not connect with living beings [...] Ray Argall's first feature is a mistake because it lacks any semblance of what might be termed money-motivation. It is so Australian in subject matter, style and content and it contends with the Australian experience with such nerve-grabbing confidence that it is destined for a place in our film history.¹

While *Review House* is fine film, and represents a continuing stream of 'realist' films in the Australian industry, it cannot be seen as a passport for the entire industry. More important, the polarised concepts invoked by Breton, the notion of 'formalism', 'international', 'money-motivation' are juxtaposed with 'Australian', 'subject matter, style and content'. What exactly is an 'Australian subject matter, style and content'? Implied within this 'debate' is the assumption that melodrama, and its ability to generate strong emotions in the audience, together with the strong narrative drive and tight causality of the classical system, is somewhere alien to the Australian cinema.

In this confusion between 'Australian content/themes' and formal structure that has confined the debate to the emotional level of the international and formulaic ('bad') counterposition an overtly 'Australian content' ('good') cinema. The content can be 'Australian' no matter what formal system is chosen. Yet the polarised parameters of pseudo-American 'B grade' stories versus 'scholarly' Australian stories are constantly repeated.²

Implicit in these polarised positions is a vague conception of a 'pure' Australian aesthetic that is not created by formal presentation of the classical system and the melodramatic tradition. In 1979 Phillip Adams vigorously condemned *Mad Max* (George Miller) as *The Disasters*, calling it the 'dangerous pornography of death'. What Adams was reacting against was not just the overt violence of *Mad Max* but also the narrative structure and its skilful use of melodrama. At a time when *Pleasant of Hanging Rock* seemed to have indicated the 'true path' for an industry desiring artistic prestige coupled with viable financial returns, the commercial success of *Mad Max* threatened that orthodoxy.

The classical narrative paradigm and the melodramatic tradition are normally associated with Hollywood, as the American film industry has been the most effective industry to develop an wide audience appeal, yet, it is by no means unique to Hollywood. Both the American and Australian film industries evolved from the aesthetic norms that dominated the popular theatre and literature in the late 19th Century, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was as popular in the Australian theatre in the last century as *Pleasant of the Open* is today. This tradition was evident in pre-World War II

Australian (journals,...) Australia's most expensive silent film, For the Term of His Natural Life (Norman Dawn, 1927), and the Great sound features of the 1930s, together with the work of, arguably, Australia's most important pre-1970 filmmaker, the director Charles Chauvel.

Since its re-emergence in the early 1970s, particularly after the critical success of *Pleasant of Hanging Rock* in 1973, the Australian cinema has maintained an ambivalent attitude to this narrative system, rarely fully embracing it or alternative systems. *Pleasant of Hanging Rock* is a rarity in that it was the only Australian film to clearly reject the narrative construction of the classical system in favour of the European arthouse and at the same time gross more than \$40 million in domestic rentals. Without pushing a cause and effect argument too far, the formal legacy of this film was apparent for, at least, the next few years following its release. [...]

TOWARDS A NATIONAL CINEMA

In both Britain and Australia, in the periods of our interest, there is a discernible movement towards a cinema which might lay claim to a national identity, whatever kinds of implications it clearly owns. In neither case is this a smoothly continuous process: there are times in each when direction, whether towards nationalism, or indeed any goal, seems to be lost; there are, however, key points in each when we feel it is true to say this is a peculiarly British or a peculiarly Australian cinema. For better and for worse, some would say. It is worth considering where each stood at the beginning of the two crucial decades before looking at what made them crucial. [...]

The period leading up to the British film boom, the last 1930s, is unlike the 1960s in Australia in many ways. British feature films were at least being made in large numbers even if their popularity was limited. What the two precursors decide to have in common is a continuing stream of documentary production. In Britain, the documentary movement was dominated by John Grierson who, in director Pat Jackson's words, 'having been a great educationalist himself, and having a great belief in education, [...] surrounded [...] himself with young academics'.³ Grierson's influence was, perhaps as consequence, often rather schoolmasterly, but he succeeded for a time such filmmakers as Humphrey Jennings, Cronkite and Harry Watt who, in their diverse ways, later brought new impulses into British cinema. These impulses led documentary and feature filmmaking alike. A number of these directors, including the three just mentioned, as well as Pat Jackson and Jack Lee, eventually broke away from (in Lee's terms) Grierson's 'bureaucratic theories' and dilemmas, deciding that, 'instead of champions against the day, cinema, books and music, [they] would like to do films about flesh and blood, about people'.⁴ It is their effect on the feature film that is our primary concern here: the prestige won by British cinema in the 1940s drew from several key elements, but one of them is undoubtedly the new infusion of 'realism', of a documentary-like observation, into the feature film.

It cannot be said that the documentary movement in Australia, especially as manifested in the 1960s, the decade before the

feature-film reveal, had a comparably profound effect on those feature-makers. Nevertheless, it was documentary filmmaking which was largely responsible in the quarter-century following the war for maintaining any semblance of a film industry in Australia. There were private companies making documentaries – for example, Ken G. Hall's Commonwealth Productions and the Shell Film Unit which, under John Hoyer, made the famous feature-length work, *The Bark of Geyser* (1954), and there was the Commonwealth Film Unit (CFU), which had a major success with *The Queen's Australia* (1954).

By the 1960s, even though the CFU continued to make plenty of films and though it could be argued that these kept the wheels of the industry going at a time when feature films were at their lowest ebb, the CFU became increasingly hamstrung in its approach and the film less memorable. Ross Lambert, writing on 1960s Australian cinema as 'The Dark Age', claims that 'Television, not the CFU, was the seed-bed of the 1970s film industry'²¹, drawing attention not only to popular fictional series but also to current affairs and documentary programmes such as *A Big Country*.

If there is a legacy of the documentary movement in the 1970s feature-film revival, it is perhaps most present in the emphasis on the landscape, which one finds at work in such films as *Sunday Too Far Away* (Ken Hannam, 1973) and *Finnis At Hanging Rock* (both 1975), or on bush values which surface variously in such films as 'Water Peep' (Ted Rothwell, 1975) and *Gawley Town* (Peter Maxwell, both 1971) or *The Bushman* (Donald Crombie, 1978). Perhaps, too, such films as *JNA* (Robert Scott, 1975) and *Place 3* (Bert Delling, 1978) owe something to the documentary tradition of television journalism, but the influence can be much less confidently placed in Australia than in British cinema.

British critic Gerald Brown has said:

[In] the '60s people had really wanted to see American films in the cinema, and the British companies were trying to compete with the Americans by importing American ones. That didn't come off but in the '60s, because of the war situation and the censorship that people didn't really want to see British films because, for the first time, British filmmakers had a subject – the war front, the nuclear campaign – a subject which the Americans couldn't handle. For the first time they had a subject which had a sort of national feeling built into it.²²

If Britain was to have a cinema of its own, a national cinema that made a genuine appeal to local audiences at the very least, then it seems to have seemed for, in Brown's view, 'a subject' [...] which the Americans couldn't handle'. Given Dilys Powell's words, 'It took a war to compel the British to look at themselves and find themselves interesting'²³ The success of a new kind of British film in the early 1940s is not, of course, just the result of 'a subject' but has to do with the way British filmmakers handled this subject. This means as to the importance of the documentary influence making itself felt in the feature films of the war years. This influence has by now been thoroughly discussed by critics and scholars [...]

For whatever reasons – miscalculation, the failure to respond creatively to the threat of invasion, misguided attempts to woo American audiences – it was clear that the British film industry was running out of creative steam towards the end of the 1930s (cf. Richard Austin-Smith's words about exploiting a 'theory of success'). In the last three months of 1968, 36 British films were released;²⁴ of these, it is at least arguably true that only two – *Pat Jackson's Virgin Island* and Seth Holt's *Shower To Go* – show any real freshness or inventiveness. [...]

These three months have been quoted because they provide a brief but important re-examination of the end of the decade, with the social-realist films collected in by the January 1969 release of *Rome at the Top* (Jack Clayton). This was followed by a batch of notable

films by directors new to feature film, men such as Karel Reisz, Lindsay Anderson, John Schlesinger and Tony Richardson. Their films (for example, *Look Back in Anger*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *The Sporting Life*) showed a new willingness to move away from tried stereotypes, to explore working-class lives and life as it was lived away from the institutional purities of the Home Counties. They brought new actors into British film, the likes of Albert Finney, Tom Courtenay and Rachel Roberts. [...]

The last period of the decade also saw the start of 'Humanist Films' reworking of the Gothic myths of Frankenstein and Dracula, producing films that were often critically derided as the time and are now seen to have had their best – for example, *The Devils of Dracula* (Terence Young, 1968) – a nerve and style rare at the time in British films.

If British cinema received a shot in the arm at the end of the 1930s, the same can scarcely be said for the new Australian cinema at the end of the 1960s. However, the two preceding decades offer some quite striking parallels with the general tendencies of the British cinema in its most notably productive period. The following for crucial historical differences, in both social terms and in the changed industrial situation in which a film industry might be located, it may still be instructive to compare the distinguishing characteristics of the two 'boom' periods. Where the pre-war British cinema was a largely harmless, often makeshift affair, the Australian revival of the 1970s grew out of a 'virtual vacuum'²⁵ in which almost the only feature films were made by overseas filmmakers, both American and British. The Americans, including Stanley Kramer (*On the Beach*, 1959) and, desert from Hollywood's poverty row, Lindsay Anderson (*The Kingess Red*, 1960), normally used Australia 'as an exotic backdrop for the sort of films which, with minor adjustments, might have been made anywhere'.²⁶ The British, from Harry Watt's *Endless River* – *The Overboard* (1946), *Barbie's Stash* (1948) and *The Step of Psychology* (1958) – to Michael Powell's *They're a Weird Mob* (1966) and *The Age of Consent* (1968), were more concerned to understand the Australian ethos in a place distant from their home territory. These films were often well-liked in Australia (*They're a Weird Mob* was a greatest-office success), but made little impact overseas. Gordon Jackson, imported star of *Smash* (*Smash* and *Star Spangled* (Ralph Smart, 1960), felt that both were very 'indulgent' productions – 'films which could easily have been made in a couple of months took six or seven months'²⁷ and that the finished films reflected the lack of tightness in planning and schedule.

Between the end of World War II and 1970, there was scarcely any truly Australian feature filmmaking – not more than a couple of dozen feature films altogether, and not more than two of these had even the most modest commercial success. The talents of potential filmmakers turned (bored) on documentaries, commercials and television. The British and the American films made in Australia are criticised by Bruce Mackinnon in recent study, *After the Second*²⁸, which makes new claims for them as offering an interesting perceptions of Australia in a period often dramatically written off. Whatever the merits of the case, it is hard to feel that these films or the other very local productions of the period (for example, the Chips Rafferty-Lee Robinson collaborations of the 1960s) offered either Australians or the world at large the sense of a thriving film industry. No more than was the case in Britain in the 1930s could the Australian film industry of the 1960s and 1970s be said to be significantly in touch with the national life, the values were, on the whole, content to exploit their new acting rather to explore it.

In the periods immediately preceding what we have claimed to be the most significant in terms of a national cinema in the two countries, there is little sense in which the cinema might be said to have created in either as a marketplace for the national life, in all its variations and its recognisability. Whatever is happening in the cinema in these two lead-up periods is about to be dramatically

superficial. In the films that follow, the sights and sounds and attitudes of their country of origin will be reflected, represented, assimilated as never before in the filmmaking history of cinema. If it was the war which gave a new impetus to British cinema, it is at least arguable that the mid 1970s flowering of Australian cinema may be seen as deriving from the new national pride and confidence instilled by the Whitlam Government, which came to power at the end of 1972. Australian nationalists feeling asserted itself with a new majority (as withdrawing troops from the Vietnam War, for instance) an international affairs at home, Labor-voting had become socially acceptable among younger people previously of, or from backgrounds of, more conservative orientation. Allegiance to Britain and British institutions was waning, royal visits no longer induced huge crowds of enthusiastic monarchists, "God Save the Queen" was supplanted by "Advance Australia Fair" as the national anthem (except in the presence of the Queen or her representatives) and imperial honours were dropped federally in 1973. Interestingly, when the Liberal (that is, conservative) Party returned to power (1975-80), these honours were not restored and various Labor governments also dropped them in favour of indigenous honours.

TAKING ON THE OPPOSITION: GOVERNMENTS INTERVENE

On a legislative as distinct from an artistic level, the attempts at creating a national cinema in Britain and Australia have both required considerable government intervention to prop them up. One lesson of President Roosevelt's encouraging that to that U.S. filmmaker towards an anti-imperialist stance – for example, his praise for such films as *Lady Hamilton* (Alexander Korda, 1941) and *Mrs Miniver* (William Wyler, 1942)² – during the early days of World War II, and in the late 1940s and early 1950s, of course, the American government (through the House U.S./American/Canadian Committee) intervened in dramatically explicit ways in the Hollywood film industry. However, there was comparable history of the U.S. government's being besought or required to support the film industry. The government was perfectly well aware of the power and influence of cinema, but American cinema had established its hegemonic position internationally long before World War II.

Both Britain and Australia, in the periods of our cinema particularly, have required regular intervention by government or its instrument bodies, and no doubt those involved in the industry would claim that government support has never been enough. Government behaviour in regard to cinema has been patchy and ad hoc, partly economic in its emphasis. In Britain, although many of the government's utterances hail in favour the need to secure American markets and to impose taxes on American film imports, one also finds cultural arguments [...]

WHY CAN'T BRITAIN OR AUSTRALIA COMPETE WITH HOLLYWOOD?

The answer to this endlessly recurring problem are complex and in part too intricate (in the book) to attempt a satisfactory reply. However, what does seem certain is that the answers are both industrial and aesthetic: it is partly a matter of money, population and distribution, it is also a matter of what audiences have wanted to see: [...]

Perhaps it is above all a matter of money for production and promotion, money which available in American launch and well-financed expensive enterprises. Lack of money, and the inadequacy of the local markets to sustain the local industry, may be crucial, but there is also a sense in which the U.S. industry has shown a more conscious awareness of the massed nature of its own population. Whereas British films of the 1940s and 1950s, and Australian films of the 1970s and 1980s, at their most visible, most prodigious, seem to be catering to a middle-class intelligentsia

(perhaps Great Expectations, 1946, and Patrick Hamilton's *Reck*, 1953, can serve as classic examples), American films have been able to tell stories that are both appealing to the educated audiences and richly textured enough to interest the educated. The class-based, thematically unified films of high British cinema had a limited appeal for American audiences, and the intermixture of much of both British and Australian cinema is well-removed from the consistently-situated American product. At their best, too, both high British and new Australian cinema have offered films obviously 'national' in their orientations, which can sometimes give them a distinct appeal to limited audiences, whereas, in Tom O'Rogan's words, Hollywood appears to be the only 'national cinema' which is not 'national cinema'.³ The limited American films that have dominated world markets have been powerfully narrative-driven, films organised on emotionally infallible melodramatic lines. In both Britain and Australia, there has always been contention about whether local films should remain recognisably indigenous or whether they should consciously aim for the international. Attempts at the latter have usually failed. [...]

As long as distribution and exhibition remain – as they were in Britain in the 1940s-1950s and in Australia in the 1970s-1980s – businessmen rather than artists or philanthropists, so can we expect them to remain deeply committed to box-office returns. If U.S. films continue to be the staple of the commercial cinema, there will continue to be relatively meagre chances for local producers (and this situation is much worse now than it was for British producers in the 1940s and 1950s) either to win satisfactory local releases or to get their products shown on mainstream U.S. screens. ■

NOTES

- For example, *Jack of Alls* (Cecilia Gilford, 1950) and *The Captives* (Brian Wright, 1957).
- Andrew Higgins, "The Concepts of National Cinema", *Screen*, Vol. 30 No. 4, Autumn 1990, p. 48.
- Recent books – such as Ian Burton (ed.), *Cinema in Australia: A Documentary History*, University Press, Kensington, 1988 and Susan Trennally and Elizabeth Jacka, *The Shaping of Australia: Anatomy of a Film Industry* (Volume 1, Cinema Press, Sydney 1987) – have given valuable accounts of the 'industry' aspects of Australian cinema.
- See David Bordwell, James Steger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985.
- Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "That Do We Need It?" in *Screen* 1987 and Nick Rodick (ed.), *British Cinema: New British Film Institute* London 1985 p. 152.
- Marion Ector, "Waters Mean", *Mean*, No. 55, Winter 1989, p. 14.
- Chen Nomen from the Australian Film Commission, submitted this comment in reply to a question on the *Telley* show, broadcast on Channel Ten 28-October 1988.
- The Briton*, 1 May 1979.
- Interview with Pat Jackson, London, October 1989.
- Interview with Jack Lee, Sydney, October 1988.
- Ron Lenzell, "The Dark Age", in Lenzell and Peter Sedley (eds), *The Documentary Film in Australia*, Cinema Papers association with Film Victoria, 1992, p. 45.
- Interview with Geoff Brown, London, September 1989.
- Dale Powell, "Films Since 1980", in *Screen* 1978, *Resident's Union* and British Council, London, 1980 p. 69.
- See Dennis Gifford, *The British Film Catalogue 1959-1970*, David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1971.
- Susan Trennally and Elizabeth Jacka, *The Shaping of Australia: Anatomy of a Film Industry* (Volume 1, Cinema Press, Sydney 1987), p. 71.
- Brian McFarlane, *Australian Cinema 1929-1953*, Sackler and Warburg, London, 1995.
- Interview with Gordon Jackson, London, September 1989.
- Bruce Malloy, *Agony in the Desert*, The University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1980.
- See Colin Strickland, *Hollywood Goes to War: Film and American Society 1915-1945*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, for a fuller assessment of Roosevelt's relations with cinema.
- Tom O'Rogan, "Bringing Together: Text and Context: Why is Hollywood the Popular?" (unpublished paper), Murdoch University, June 1989.



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AUSRAIA



BERLIN AND ROTTERDAM FILM FESTIVALS

REPORT BY PAUL KALINA

BERLIN



Berlin gives itself to become the proud capital of the reun-

ified Germany. It is somewhat ironic that its cultural and artistic institutions face their most crucial moment. For decades, both parts of the divided city thrived on special privileges, the West German government having pumped billions of Deutsche marks into the city in a bid to lure business to the isolated outpost. Cultural organizations were amply subsidized, Berlin being home to generously funded film, music and theatre festivals. A system of grants also ensured that many filmmakers and artists from various parts of the globe came to work in the city.

An immediate effect of reunification has been a cut of 11 per cent in Berlin's cultural budget (according to a recent article in *Art in America*), the result not only of more 'rationalized' allocations, but also the considerable costs of rebuilding the two

perennially East. The Berlin Film Festival hasn't managed successful masterings about budget cuts and limited resources were, for the first time perhaps, rehearsed around the trope of this year's Festival.

Nonetheless, the most obvious complaint at this year's Berlinale concerned the quality of the films and, to a lesser degree, the policy (first introduced last year) that sees the press corps of more than 5000 crisscross the Congress Centre, Berlin's press, the more has many advantages, from less crowding (a benefit to the rest of the festival guests, too) to the convenience of not having to queue for tickets. The problem, however, begins with the fact that while the Competition is screened in its entirety here, only a selection of Panorama films are screened and the Forum programme had some inexcusable omissions, such as Luc Moullet's latest film, *La Gâche des Guerras*, and David and Judith MacDougall's *Photo Wallah*. The problems continue when the screenings end, when hundreds of people try to pile into sin-

ister shuttle buses and crowded Berlin buses. Located in the middle of the Tiergarten, the Congress Centre is not reachable by Berlin's highly efficient U-Bahn.

For more important, however, this year's programme did little to quell the growing criticism over the quality and standard of films selected for the Berlin Competition. The predominance of big-budget, mainstream American films has long been a contentious issue, and this year's inclusion of ten American films, including Barry Levinson's *Baggy*, Nicholas Meyer's *See Jack Run*, *The Unborn*, *The Gentry* and Martin Scorsese's *Cape Fear* (which had already been screened throughout Europe last Germany, where it opened within days of the Festival closing), drew the expected protests. Festival director Martin de Haas's response relied on the standard explanation that the inclusion of these films re-

above: JOHN STURTZ (JULIAN KURAT), A LOOSE SCARFED MANAGER AND WITHOUT A BATHROOM PASS, CONSIDER A VERY LATELY.



Alive in Yaman, The Party: Nighty Movie in a loopy, dark, elliptical chamber-piece that ties the occasion of a cocktail party to recount the transient relationship of its hero, played by Fender Akase, and the marvelously transgressive Taka/Seizawa. Directed by Cynthia Brute, it is EMU Mikasa's second-most and surely black-and-white photography that really makes this film memorable in spite of its many self-consciously 'arty' scenes.

ROTTERDAM

If it were a less than auspicious year for new film at Berlin, the Rotterdam Film Festival compensated with a host of overlooked and underplayed recent films from around the globe. Judging from the fact that only one Chantal Akerman film has played in America during the past few years (*Maestro d'Ambrigo*, screened at the 1994 Sydney Film Festival), one could be excused for thinking that she had stopped making films. Nothing could be further from the truth. Her latest film, *Not of Fear (Night and Day)*, is one of the most suspenseful, visually refined and suspenseful films of Akerman's career. A glorious chronicle of young lovers, the ingenious plot centers on a woman living two half lives in one complete life: By day, and then by night, she meets with her two lovers, who work alternating shifts as taxi drivers.

It was also possible at Rotterdam to take a crash course in the filmmaking career of Kikuo Taketoshi. He is a media superstar in his native Japan (where he is known as "Beet" Taketoshi) and has acted in many films, most memorably playing the role of the gruff, sadistic Sergeant O'Hara in Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*. In only three films, he has carved out a highly individualistic set of thematic concerns and a striking directorial style. His first film, *Love strike by the sea (Blowing? This Movie Will Make Violent Copy)*, is a variation on the standard vigilante cop movie, with Taketoshi as the main rule on the violent, wild-card cop whose uncompromising, if anarchic, moral principles ostracize him from his colleagues. He played only a small role in his next film, *3-4 x Japan (Rolling Post)*, though it is in fact a thoroughly unimpeachable film that refers to baseball scores, disappointing completely behind the scenes for his latest film, *A Shore at the Sea*. The story here of a mute boy's obsession for making sense about vehicles for Taketoshi's continuing fascination with characters who society considers to be "too damaged", who nonetheless overcome the cruel obstacles they find in their paths. As with the subject particularly suits the leisurely, casual rhythms of Taketoshi's direction, which prefers to use action, long takes and deep focus to convey meaning.

Given speculation about the future of cinema (what used to be the Sacred Union

LEONARD MALTIN'S ROSS MACDONALD BOOKS, NEW YORK

already broke Nikolai Dostoev's superb *Obsession* (Clash Books) a poignant nostalgia. An exemplary instance of parabolic storytelling, this "light case romance" about a young man who dreams of one day leaving his home in the dull, depressed village of Moscow in a trucking, meeting and deeply affecting portrait of that unbridgeable gap between what is and what might be.

If there's a film that stands out in the rafted, "supplest" sense of a film festival, it is Barry Shils' endlessly inventive road-movie *After River*. Based on a masterfully restless screenplay by *After River* Joe Miano, it is an irreverent, hilarious yet bleak trip through the dark recesses of American consciousness. Shils' apprehension in the rough and tumble of Larry Cohen filmmaking is clearly evident in the rocky journey of a twenty-year-old boy who sets out in a stolen car to collect "Motonomi" tokens. Like an episode from the life of a not-too-distant Bart Simpson, Motonomi's house of reference is largely that of pop culture: the wild energy of heavy metal, the anything-goes of cartoons, the hilarious violence of *Holly Hobbles*, the destruction of long-forgotten television shows (see if you can identify the numerous vulgar censors). Would it be crazy to suggest that film festivals today need a few more films like that?

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♦ **THE LAST DAYS OF CHAZ NOBIS**
Director: Colleen Sweeney
Starring: Steven Seagal
Lilli Marlene

♦ **SPOTWOOD**
Director: Mark Jaffe
Starring
♦ **AMERICAN WORKING**

♦ **SECRETS**
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Music of THE BEATLES

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THE WRITERS, RECORD OF THE AUSTRALIAN-FRENCH RELATIONSHIP CONVERSATIONS, CLOSING THE END OF THE WORLD.

Un

WIM WENDERS

INTERVIEWED BY

ANA MARIA BAHIANA

Across fifteen cities in eight countries and four continents, a woman chases a man. The woman, Claire (Solvaig Dommartin), is both fascinated, intrigued and irritated by the man, Sam (William Hurt), who apparently is an industrial spy and who may or may not have robbed something that she had – and that, after all, she didn't own. They finally meet in the Australian outback, while the rest of the world is, apparently, in the throes of apocalypse, thanks to a stray nuclear satellite.

In the outback there is a new world to replace the dying one: a world of images and dreams, conjured by a scientist (Max Von Sydow) in his life-long quest to offer the gift of sight to his blind wife (Jaanna Moran). There, Claire and Sam must proceed on a journey of their own, through a dream world, a world more awesome and dangerous than the moribund Earth of 1999. "It's the ultimate road movie", says Wenders with a broad smile. "I always wanted to make one like this."

Until the End of the World

Until the End of the World



Wanderer was briefly in Los Angeles in early December to help launch *Until the End of the World*, a film that, besides the presence of William Hurt—a rare-fire actor with American made-good—has the added bonus of an extraordinary hip sound track, now with the likes of U2, Peter Dinklage, Talking Heads, Lou Reed and R.E.M., among others, have contributed their talents.

Three months later, though, true to Hollywood's prophesy of Wanderer as a "difficult" and "arty" director, *Until the End of the World* has amassed an unimpressive amount of over 175 \$200,000 at the American box office, a ridiculous, compelling vision created by the image backs/butts between holiday godfathers like *Alack*, *Private of Poles* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

Not that Wanderer really came after five "exhausting years in Los Angeles," he's stuck in Germany for good, and defines himself, unconvincingly, as "an European filmmaker. Better yet, I'm all over the place," he says. "I travel a lot. I like to travel, and not only for the sake of this film. A big part of my life is reading and listening to music and traveling. It's still a big world out there."

Was the primary springboard for your film the deep-rooted fear people have always had, but which seemed to grow in the 1950s, that the end of the world is imminent?

Asking to disappear from you, I thought that if the story of the nuclear satellite were happening, and generating anxiety, it was because the people had no information and just imagined a worldwide catastrophe.

But yes, I think we have been so much afraid, especially since the 1950s and all through the '60s and '70s, that nuclear disaster may be in our future. And maybe the more dangerous disaster is one that happens not with nuclear weapons but inside our minds. In a way, these people [on the film] survived that nuclear disaster rather well, but they do not survive the nuclear bomb which is going into their brains.

What kind of bomb is that?

Images. When I thought of doing a science-fiction film, I wasn't in the really-new future. The aspect that I was most interested in was what will happen in our whole visual culture. We are all so aware of the fact that we're living in a time where the imagery around us is just exploding. Our lives over the past ten to twenty years have been so much taken over by the development of all the images around us. Nobody's going to stop this avalanche of images and I felt that I wanted to translate it into some sort of metaphor.

We've gotten used to all the violence getting out of hand. We've gotten used to even our most intimate life, which is our sexual life, being exposed on images. Where would they go in the future? Where can they go? What is the last frontier for images?

With all the technology at their disposal, I thought that the last territory they could gain was the characters' minds, their most interior images, their dreams and memories. I took that more or less for a metaphor.

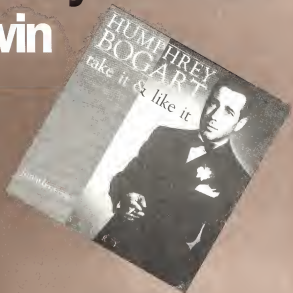
Given that images and dreams were the primary trigger, how did you evolve the project from there?

Until the End of the World had two different beginnings, the first in 1977 when I traveled to Australia. I encountered an incredibly ancient, gigantic, empty land and an Aboriginal people who have been living there for 40,000 years in a more or less unchanged way. I started to write a story that only took place there. It basically dealt with the nuclear catastrophe and an underground laboratory where this man was trying to show these images to his blind wife.

The movie started a second time when Solving and I wrote a story that was vaguely based on the idea of what would happen if *The Gipsy*, the oldest story known to man kind, were seen from a woman's point of view. I mean, Penelope would certainly not stay home and wait for Ulysses to come back; she would get on the next plane.

So we tried to tell a love story that was the reversal of *The Gipsy*, where Penelope followed Ulysses, trying to get him back home. And while we were thinking about this, and writing a love story and road movie, we also returned to Australia, where the whole other

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Wanders: "Dreams are our greatest source of inspiration. Everybody who is doing something creative has to rely on his dreams. Dreams are very sacred. They are at the base of our identity. They are more of a mystery than even people who have figured them out want to admit."



story came back. Suddenly, the two stories got married, so to speak, and from then on they stayed together.

How did your deep impression of Aboriginal culture finally make its way into the script?

The Aborigines play a crucial part in the story. They're the film men to say, "Hold it, don't go any further", and they are the first ones to pull out. They are the only ones who really understand right away that this [dreams] is a territory that should not be entered.

In a way, the whole film and the whole story started when I first met these people. So, to me, the first part of the movie— all the travelling, is really a track to get to Australia. It was crucial for the film that you did this trip around the world before entering the other world in Australia. We have to go through the first act to get to the second and into the third, which is the dream territory.

Both Deon Martin and Peter Carey share the screenplay credit with you. How did that work relationship evolve?

Sobeng and I developed the story together, but the actual screenplay was written by Peter, based on the story that Sobeng and I developed for over a couple of years. We muddled with the story, in a way. We found the blue ray, we prepared the story together, then Peter came in when we had a 50-page story but no script.

How did you decide on the casting? At what point did you cast William Hurt, for instance?

The casting was sort of predetermined by the script, in which all these people had different nationalities. From the beginning, Claire was French, while Sam was American with French-German parents. Eugene, the writer, was supposed to be Irish, and there was a German detective and an Australian beauty's mother. So there were the greens when we started casting.

Bill came in very quickly and without any problems whatsoever. He read the script and immediately said, "That's the next film I want to do and I'm going to give it as much time as it needs

LEFT TO RIGHT: HURT (FRANK COLETT), AND LUCY (ELIANE) MEET IN THE AMERICAN PART OF THE FILM; HURT AND CAREY (JENNIFER) MEET IN THE AMERICAN PART OF THE FILM; HURT AND CAREY (JENNIFER) MEET IN THE AMERICAN PART OF THE FILM; HURT AND CAREY (JENNIFER) MEET IN THE AMERICAN PART OF THE FILM; HURT AND CAREY (JENNIFER) MEET IN THE AMERICAN PART OF THE FILM.

I will not plan anything else until I finish this." Bill was very generous.

Dreams are central to this film. Do you pay attention to your own dreams? Do they inspire you?

Very, very much so. I think dreams are the most precious thing we have.

Some time ago, there were experiments made by keeping people from dreaming. They were insane.

Dreams are our greatest source of inspiration. Everybody who is doing something creative has to rely on his dreams. Dreams are very sacred. They are at the base of our identity. They are more of a mystery than even people who have figured them out want to admit. Dreams are our minds at work, but on their own. They are an in-built healing mechanism that enables us to deal with the difficulties we encounter.

Have you ever been analyzed? Some filmmakers, like Steven Spielberg, shy away from analysis for fear it will damage their creativity.

When I was young, I made for seven years a very classic Freudian analysis based mainly on dreams. I got very disciplined about it. If I woke up in the middle of the night, I would write the dream down immediately. That really helped me become a very experienced dreamer, not to speak. After a while, I realized I was able to learn to remember the dreams, and able to grab hold of them.

You have said many times that a film is a life of its own. That is why you like to shoot chronologically and use very small crews. How could you do this with a film of such large scale as *Until the End of the World*?

Until the End of the World



ABOVE: ALAN BASTIEN (FRAN ARNET) AND DAVID WHITE (JULIAN MORRIS).
BELOW: WHITE AND BASTIEN IN AN OUTRAGE AUSTRALIAN POLICE STATION,
DURING THE END OF THE WORLD

I still very much believe that, whatever story you want to tell, you have to be willing to lose the experience of that story. That's why I insist on being able to shoot *Until the End of the World* in chronological order so that in the course of making it we realize that the truth is not as we imagine it while we were writing it. We construct it, and the actors can really live through the story and not shoot the ending at the beginning and the beginning at the end. That approach is only possible if you try to reduce the machinery of the crew, because it would be very difficult to carry a Hollywood crew through a shoot that goes in reverse.

For this film, for instance, we considered going with one crew all around the world and that would have been 50 people. But then we thought it was the wrong approach and that we'd rather have the smallest basic unit we could think of and be joined by local people in each country. So, the basic crew for *Until the End of the World* was just 20 people, but in different countries we were joined by 50 or more. In America, 80 people joined us, in Australia, more than a hundred.

This turned out to be the right approach because our basic crew was so exhausted after a while by the grueling schedule and all the travel – in each country we started a new film, so to speak – that, had we done the whole trip with only one crew, we wouldn't have survived. Meeting enthusiastic and fresh people each time carried us through.

This, of course, is the exact antithesis of the Hollywood approach. Would that be one of the main disagreements between you and the American system?

It was more than that. It was a very difficult time for me as an European filmmaker working outside the studio structure. I was here in Los Angeles from 1978 to '84, basically because I was hired by Francis Ford Coppola to do *Hannibal* for Zoetrope Studios. *Hannibal* was his first picture and, as you remember, Zoetrope had a very rocky time. In a way, we were guinea pigs. *Hannibal* took five years to make and I made two other films in between, because there were long breaks due to the fact that Fred Forrest, who played Hannibal, was also in *One From the Heart*.

Did you learn anything from your American experience?

Yes, of course. I wouldn't want to have missed that experience. I learned more in the time I was here than I could have possibly learned if I had stayed home. What mattered most was my friendship with Francis and the mutual respect that we built.

Also, on the technical side, I learned a lot because here you work with the finest professionals you can possibly find on the planet. Without that, I wouldn't have been able to make films like *Until the End of the World*, which was, in fact, a piece of linguistic art, a really extremely difficult shoot in ten different countries, with ten different crews.

Your films have always been critical favorites and award winners. Do you think they have found an audience?

Internationally, yes. *Wings of Desire*, for instance, was the most successful European film ever in Japan – more than a million people saw it there. In America, it did quite well, better than *Pain, Truth, or Romance*. Three million people saw *Wings of Desire* in France, and more than two million in Italy.

So, all over the place, I think there's a very good audience for my films. Even the older films, the ones that at the time were not very successful, are today in constant demand. Mine is not a small art audience, after all.

What is, in your opinion, the role of film to entertain, to educate, to entertain?

Education is not a part that movies play well. Film can try to open the world for the people to see it, but movies should not teach, and movies should not try to force the audience to think in any particular way. I think a film should stay open so that everybody who sees it can create their own film in their mind. At least, that's my approach to filmmaking.

But this film, as you've said at the beginning, is denouncing our image culture, our image aesthetic. Shouldn't film be included in that?

This is not a film that in any way discourages filmmaking – quite the opposite. At the end, when Eugene tells the story of Claire, if her story is saving her, then I think that's what film should do. The films I make are able to tell stories. In a certain way, I'm denouncing the image culture, but it's the sort of image culture that is not linked to stories. I think movies can, by being able to tell a story, are still the most powerful thing to keep a certain morality in the image culture.



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Satyajit Ray

Prior to Satyajit Ray's recent illness, Kerstin Anderson talked with India's most famous filmmaker, and one of the most sensitive depictees of that country's social and cultural reality. They discussed several of his 36 films, including the latest, *Agantuk* (The Stranger).

OPPOSITE PAGE: SAT
AT THE TIME OF HIS RECENT
ILLNESS ON THE

Satyajit Ray spends most of his time in the study of his home on Bishop Lefroy Road in the centre of Calcutta – that is, except when he is out making his films. The room is crisscrossed with books, books and papers. “You sit down on a story when you come”, he explains. In addition to his filmmaking, Satyajit Ray also writes novels and short stories, and does sketches. The novels are published in Sweden, a magazine that he fathered, and which Ray now edits. Although written for a children’s magazine, they are equally read and loved by adults, and are also published in book form.

THE PRODUCT OF EAST AND WEST EQUALLY

Satyajit Ray belongs to the intellectual elite in India and he has his roots in Bengal and the Bengali tradition. His family was active in the intellectual movements of 19th-century Bengal.

During the colonial era, Calcutta was the main port and the centre of the British administration. The interaction between the British and the Bengali culture initiated an intellectual movement known as the “Bengali Renaissance”. It was influenced by Western liberal philosophy and was the source of such cultural forms as the Bengali novel, journalism and new forms of theatre.

This cultural interaction also gave rise to social reform movements towards which the social film took the firm step. The Brahmo Samaj, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, brought about social and religious customs such as sati – the tradition of burning the widow on the husband’s funeral pyre – children’s marriage and the caste system. Ray was well aware of the importance of propaganda and education in efforts to achieve social change, and started the first Bengali newspaper.



Satyajit Ray



The *Brahmo Samaj* was supported by rich, influential Bengalis, such as the Tagore family. After Ray's death, Debendranath Tagore became the leader and incorporated a religious mysticism into its dogmas. The Ray family was closely connected with the movement, and both Ray's grandfather and his father were good friends of the Tagore family.

Satyajit Ray was brought up in the Brahmo tradition, and he continued his studies at the Western-influenced Presidency College with undergraduate honors, the university run by Tagore. During those years, Ray developed a profound interest for both Indian art and music, and classical Western music and literature.

"Western philosophers give the idea of freedom ..."

India was a British colony for a long time. How did that affect the Indian people and their culture?

The British did good things for the Indian culture. The Bengali novel was introduced by the British, and it was the British rule and British philosophers such as Locke, Mill and Bentham, as well as philosophers like Gandhi and Marx, who showed the importance of freedom. This is ironic: the British rule giving the idea of independence and freedom.

We had something called the "Bengali Renaissance". It was an intellectual movement criticizing bad social customs like sati and religious dogmas. It was inspired by the French Revolution and Ram Mohan Ray, who was the leader of one of those movements. Through writing in newspapers, people criticized society, the colonial rule and the exploitation of the farmers by the landowners.

What do you think about the interaction between India and the West today?

Mass travel has today and the Western influence is great. We are no longer isolated. But the new ideas only reach some. Large parts of the population do not get access to it. This is partly due to poverty. But you must also have in mind that India has produced its own technology, independent of the West.

"In my films I am dealing with Indian subjects"

You grew up in a strong Indian tradition, but were also influenced by European culture. How has this affected you?

I am the product of East and West equally. I have studied European art and literature. And when I was a child, I enjoyed celebrating Christmas, with Father Christmas and Christmas gifts and all that. I know more about the West than many Europeans do. This is due to colonialism. We were forced to learn English in school, for example.

This is the case only among educated people, not among rural people - they are illiterate and uneducated. One exception is Kerala, where nearly percent of the population is literate.

How has your cultural background influenced your films?

In my films I am dealing with Indian subjects. The content is Indian, and the style and the form is dictated by the content.

My education as a filmmaker was influenced by Hollywood. During the 1940s and '50s, we could see a lot of American film here in Calcutta. In the '50s, I was also influenced by French and Indian filmmakers: for example, Renoir and de Sica, and later on Bergman and Japanese filmmakers such as Kurosawa.

Satyajit Ray



Indian crisis and the exodus of migrants coming to Calcutta. This led to the emergence of the communist government in the state in the '60s.

Ray, who shot the Calcutta Trilogy (*Pranasmriti*, *Senshadh* and *Jana Aranya*) during this period, found it impossible not to get involved in the political events, although he didn't make any explicit political statements. In the Calcutta Trilogy he explores the turbulent situation in the city, dealing with subjects such as unemployment, corruption and the contemporary political situation. Later films like *Solgan*, *Ganashatru* and *Branch of a Tree* deal with problems of oppression, and social and political corruption. *Branch of a Tree*, his second most recent film, depicts a father discovering that his sons are into corruption and dealing with black money.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The cultural differences between India and the West is a factor that might give foreign audiences problems in understanding Indian works. This raises questions of a philosophical nature, concerning relativism. Are differences in cultural forms really so big or is there a congruence between the overt differences in cultures? What is cultural specific and what is universal? Are there any possibilities for cross-cultural communication? Is it possible for a Westerner to understand Indian works?

"Is it possible for everyone to relate?"

You are Indian and in your films you use a lot of Indian cultural symbols and codes. How do you think this affects a foreign audience?

My films are about human beings, human relationships and social problems. I think it is possible for everyone to relate to these issues.

On a certain level, foreign audiences can appreciate Indian works, but many details are missed. For example, when they see a woman with a red spot on her forehead, they don't know that this red sign showing that she is married, or that a woman dressed in a white sari is a widow. Indian audiences understand that at once, it is self-evident for them.

So on that certain level, the cultural gap is too wide. But on a psychological level, on the level of social relations, it is possible to relate. I think I have been able to cross the barrier between cultures. My films are made for an Indian audience, but I think they have bridged the gap. At least these are the reactions I get in a lot of letters from foreign admirers.

"Human problems are common"

Do you think there are human universals or are people culturally specific?

There are certain universals. Human problems are common on a psychological level. Social customs are different. For example, the relationship between man and woman exists everywhere, but in India you never see a man and a woman kiss in the street, even though that might happen in the very trendy groups. In your country, that is a normal social practice.

In India you can't show intimate relations or things like sex. Sexual freedom is impossible to show! It is a very an-Indian thing, although it appears in contemporary literature. As a matter of fact, I was the first to include a scene where two people kiss in Indian cinema. And the audience accepted it.

usually, anthropologists studied primitive peoples. Today the focus has changed, and anthropologists are equally interested in their own societies, urban problems and problems concerning migration, etc. Malinowski, Mead and Levi-Strauss criticize the predominant 19th-century view that puts other cultures and societies on an evolutionary ladder, with the Western society on the top, and with the scientific worldview regarded as a more developed mode of thought than, say, magical and religious thinking. Levi-Strauss' studies concern the contradictions between the modern and the primitive societies. He wanted to show that there is no difference in modes of thinking between the modern and primitive societies in terms of development. They are different, but equally good, ways of handling reality.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

This contradiction between modernity and tradition is a recurrent theme in Ray's films—*Ganassena* and *Dost*, for example. *Dost* is deeply rooted in the Hindu culture. A woman is living with her father-in-law while her husband is studying in Calcutta. One night the father-in-law gets a revelation that the young woman is an incarnation of the Hindu goddess Kali. The woman is treated as a goddess and finally is confined about her holiness. When the son returns home there is a confrontation between the father, with his traditional religious beliefs, and the son, who has a modern scientific worldview. When the son finally convinces the father that his views are wrong, it is too late. A sick girl dies in the arms of the woman-goddess, denied medical help.

"There are things that you can't explain scientifically"

Both *Dost* and *Ganassena* explore the contradiction between scientific thinking and religious beliefs. Do you think it is possible to explain everything scientifically?

There are some things that you can't explain scientifically, or at least can't explain scientifically yet. Just before my father died, for example, he had a psychic experience. He was giving a lecture when he suddenly started to sweat and get a fever; he knew that his death was close.

Last year in Varanasi I met a Brahmin, well educated, who drank Ganges water.

You know there is something special about the water from the Ganges. If you keep it in a container, it doesn't get modified as water usually does when you keep it for a long time.

In my latest film there are other mysteries that you can't explain—for example, this lion painting, so delicately painted. How could they do that? Then there is the interplay between the sun and moon. When the sun and the moon are in eclipse, they are equally big. My main character is convinced that no other planet can have human life, since they don't have this interplay between sun and moon.

What is your opinion on this contradiction between modernity and tradition?

The doctor in *Ganassena*, that's me. That's what I believe in. In my latest film, the anthropologist is my spokesman. I am happy to have found a very sensitive actor.

In *Agnash*, there is a cross-examination by a barrister. One question is, "When you get ill, do you call a doctor or a witch doctor?" The answer is, "I should call both, but where do I find a doctor in the jungle?" I am not a savage, the intellectual tradition is a part of me. I regret that I am not a savage, because they are in sympathy with what they are doing.

In *Ganassena*, an adaptation of Dostoev's *The Enemy of the People* to contemporary Indian cultural reality, a doctor discovers that

the holy water in the temple tank is contaminated and spreads water illness. People drink this water since they believe that it is holy. The doctor, trying to stop people, is called "the enemy of the people". Finally, however, he manages to convince people that the scientific research of the temple water is more reliable than the taken-for-granted holiness.

FILMS CAN'T CHANGE THE WORLD

RAY: I don't believe in modern life. I am disappointed, disillusioned. Take, for example, the Iraq war, what has happened to communism and socialism, and how the two Germans have united. I try not to bother about it. I only try to work. If you start thinking about all this, your head will become full of it. I express myself through my films.

But films can't change the world or society. You can't give people new ideas through films. It affects people, but only for a short while. In 1939, Romaine made a film, *The River*. It was against war. One year later, the war broke out. In *Ganassena* I show that it is dangerous to drink holy water in the temple tank, but people still drink it.

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Sway Chokochokhe (*On Cinema*), 1971], *Ekta Bala Shantanao* (*We Call it Shantanao*), 1979, *Jishun Choto Chiton* (*When I Was Small*), 1982, *Our Film This Film*, 1986

FICTION

Felicitas novels: *Sankata Anga*, 1955, *Gangotri Gangotri*, 1971], *Samar Kalia* (*The Golden Forest*), 1971], *Baba Babura*, 1973, *Ananta Kishan*, 1974, *Royal Scepter Rajkanya*, 1978], *In Bala Pehamati* (*The Elephant God*), 1979, *Felicitas and Co.*, 1977, *Ganassena Subhasan*, 1979, *Chandrimanta*, 1980], *Hariprasanna*, 1981, *Jeta Kanta Kishananta*, 1982, *Tinatarata Jeta*, 1983, *Felicitas One Felicitas Two*, 1985, *Carpeting Jangama*, 1987

Professor Shantanao novels: *Professor Shantanao*, 1960, *Professor Shantanao Kanchangopal*, 1970, *Siddha Professor Shantanao*, 1971, *Mohammar Shantanao*, 1977, *Banyan Professor Shantanao*, 1980, *Shantanao Kanta Kanta*, 1983 *Other Novels, stories and screenplays*: *Ek Dasta Gajjala*, 1970, *Am Ki Dasta*, 1976, *Panchikanta*, 1979, *Ten Pahan*, 1979, *Am Bora*, 1981, *Ekare Bora*, 1984, *Mulla Nazimuddin Gajjala*, 1985, *Pala Dasta in Aranya*, 1986, *Sagar Kanchika*, 1987, *Ekta Pala Dasta*, 1988



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**TURTLE BEACH;
HOMICIDE; BREATHING UNDER WATER;
BUSSY; BACKSLIDING; AND, BARBED**



ARVIE (LEFT) TUCKER (MIDDLE) AND
ARVIE (RIGHT) TUCKER (MIDDLE) IN
TURTLE BEACH'S TURTLE BEACH.

TURTLE BEACH
RAYMOND YOUNG

After mysterious silence, long delays and much political leavetaking, *Turtle Beach* has appeared. And we have it on good (political) authority that the film is "incredibly a work of terror" (to which one may well reply "There needs no sinister, my triangle, come from the upper chambers to tell us the 'I'"). But all I know boxing, soul-searching and leavetaking, while the film does explore topics of great importance and, for the most part, handles them well, though not always in a convincing manner.

The film explores various responses (and reactions) to the problem of the refugees in Malaysia in the 1970s. Some characters see the arrival of the refugees as an opportunity of expressing their aggression or even an opportunity to shed blood; some remain largely indifferent and distant; some see an opportunity on the black market; others (a few one must say) show some concern, some compassion and actually try to improve the situation; still others claim to be compassionate and understanding but quite powerless to act.

The film's context is crucial. Racial hatred is pervasive and striking. In fact, the film opens with a racial clash between Indian and Chinese people, and it is clear even at this stage that barbaric acts are perpetrated and even justified. One of the earliest images which is told but not forgettable involves a Chinese chef or kitchenhand who, with no apparent trace of emotion, punnels the carcass of some animal as the riot continues. This image proves, in hindsight, to be crucially significant: two or bodies and the carcass of unidentified animals are subjected to the same brutality (the same violent acts) (the only major difference, perhaps, is that the animal will be turned up in some personal or emotional creation to an appetitive episode).

The image also provides an ocean and sets the tone in general. Kuala Lumpur, the setting city, is, in fact, characterized by (and) hatred, prejudice, intolerance and savagery. And into this environment, Arvith (Doris Sorensen) is a reporter, in fact, she takes photographs and is ordered away by her friend (before she is trapped). The years pass. She is separated and has custody of the children. She learns that the Malaysian refugees are being treated. The

claps"—that is, like the several mentioned earlier perhaps—and that the authorities have been trying to conceal the facts from the world. Such people, we are told, are not only brutal but cheap too. When Minou (Joan Chen), the president of a committee which is devoted to helping refugees, disappears, Judith leaves the children with her husband and returns to Malaysia to recruit on the grounds.

The selected essay – *Highlight of the Refugee* – is examined in relation to the literary *Justified in Africa*, *Holiday* (Werner Kager), *Flight* (Jan Thompson) and *Karen* (Art Kallik), with reference to *Justified* as an oeuvre. But there are a number of sub-plots and other issues, too, though they are not highlighted as much and do not always contribute positively to our understanding of the central issue. They involve solidarity and ethnicity, Hindu purification rites (and exorcism), the ending, the prospect of an anti-capital revolution and hints of previous games in which Indians are involved. (Though it must be said) in ways that are pro-creative rather than illucentist.

The images of the authorities are negative in general. These authorities are corrupt and take in the form of money; they are brutal and repressive [not just in relation to the refugees], they falsify data, punish and harass. Even worse, the villages are death-traps for those who come to live in them: a silent killing of refugees to death in the night, because they are seen to contradict the dishonesty of a shrewd refugee's body. The death of these "silent", violent or otherwise, is a thing to be feared. This may pose somewhat contrary to some views, but it is the prevalent state of the villages.

The lack of reasons for such actions only makes the killings even more horrific for us viewers, either briefly, and it is not contained in a critical light by the filmmakers. And though the film presents a number of powerful images – the sequences at Turin show the state of the refugee camp with its enclosure for “unaccompanied minors”, a bare concrete tower for children whose parents drowned, and estimate the top were murdered by the villagers – there is much that is left out from the evidence of the whole.

The screenplay includes unnecessary dialogue through Costa's blarney in particular and when Chen performs credulity in the control room. On a number of occasions characters merely state what is obvious (for example, Judith mentions after a nightmare and Koenig says "You had a nightmare"; Judith and Miriam are seen together at the beach, and the police chief says to Miriam, "How have I heard" etc.). A better script would have been of great benefit.

At other times, dialogue offers little more than platitudes ("corruption is all levels") and the consequence is unfortunate: it seems that there is no real effort to get behind the language. And it is notable that the most forceful scenes are those where the images and music are allowed to convey the meanings. Another problem, especially in the earlier sections, is an overdependence in handling the many transitions. These sections have displayed the connections as abrupt, even jarring.

The fire is most effective when it concentrates on the **middle** of the industry — and often

time it is it also effective when it is because of the plight of the two women who (re)discover what it means to be a mother and who become aware of the meanings that are required by their bond and in order to affirm the nature of their love and commitment. That something positive emerges in such a harsh land is almost by some logic, certainly, but Judith's new-found hope arises in the end from her love. In contrast, the plight of the refugees, whose fate without personal aid is bleak, even more sinister, never presages and even to resolve.

[illegible]

BREATHE UNDER WATER

0000-0001-9678-900X

Susan Murphy Derrindly's first feature is remarkable for its combination of a character-driven narrative with archival footage and estimated sequences to give a poetic and symbolic tale of a search for meaning in a world of chaos. Based on a journey of descent into an imaginary underworld land, we follow Derrindly in her quest for clues to an understanding of human nature and the isolated presentation by Parliament for its own business contribution.

Electra (Anne Louise Lambert) takes her daughter Mene (Mene Kennedy) to school for in this education-office best-of-both-worlds. They are accompanied by Hermes (Krisztofer Greeny) who acts as their guide and can be seen to represent Hermes, the Greek god who could travel to and from the underworld with ease.

The three travellers, who for the most part communicate with an easy panache of gas-tunes and meaningful looks, quickly establish a sense of trust and camaraderie – the thrill of a shared and mystery-propelled adventure into the dark recesses of the underworld rich with monsters, magic and may. Kennedy places great emphasis on faith in the map. Kennedy has borrowed, so to speak, from Dante's *Inferno*, a classic, literary, metaphorical, and, of course,

The questionnaire is answered with answers of



viewing both concrete and abstract, representing not only what is beneath the surface of everyday life but also the unconscious, heightening consciousness and the world of the soul.

The rivers of the unconscious represent for Derrida the depths of the mind: the world of intuition, emotions, dreams and memories, and which are excluded in various ways.

While a voice-over of scenes Giffen Jones narrates the journey, we hear Luridan describe Deacon's dreams, memories and sophisticated childhood fantasies which are beautifully illustrated by animation sequences under Lee Robinson's sensitive direction.

As Pell's journey passes through many stages and mysterious places, each visit is peppered with black-and-white images ranging from the serene to harrowing to the macabre and horrific.

Over the ~~middle~~ **middle** stage of their lives in the ninth circle of Pluto's republic which is annexed by night across water. The first verb is stately white and ice – a metaphor of multinational mass inclusiveness – representing the "paradise" of "freedom" and the place where our deepest fears reside. But it is graphic and distressing footage of a person's sentiments self interpretation followed by millions of a person being scapegoated and his fears removed. What the latter sequence is intended to elude is it is hard to know exactly, perhaps, our fear of death.

DeBordy explains that the method itself is not strictly illustrative but used to trigger the operator's train of thought based on their own associations with the subject matter.

This creates a tension between the text and the images, and because it is difficult to

substantive (in both the visual and the aural) footage as they seem to be at odds or detaching from each other.

Barbara descends into the underworld in order to face the terrifying evidence of human atrocities. This is supposed to be an empowering act, but for Barbara and/or us, it evokes an active response rather than the usual cinematic tendency to close our eyes with a paralyzing apathy to the horror exposed.

Deermody believes that "to allow greater access to unexplored states is to free people cognitively [...] to be more alive and active and interconnected with everything." Barbara articulates a list of that which has been relegated to the underworld: the feminine, the irrational, mythical things, the company of gods, myth as a form of knowledge — largely abstract concepts which, if reclaimed, may assist humankind to do against the drive towards destruction and probable extinction.

The child remains untouched by visions of horror while delightfully enjoying his discovery. The preservation of the future generation is faith and innocence versus paranoia.

Deermody treats her subject matter with a light and careful touch, but her children's unearthly facts without being absorbed into cinematic immobility. The dialogue has heavy subject matter with sometimes a thinnish footage, such as that of people dying under water or members of the Neanderthals merely passing as human skeletons on fire.

Early in the film the (intrepid) Neanderthal one of the museum exhibits, "the ancestral bond", bring the infamous nuclear disaster which annihilated cities such as Nagasaki into existence. We see they are a living display of small boys in tank suits, yet in this way Deermody does not trivialize the reference but rather complements the bomb, ridiculously ineffective applications of "Little Boy" and "Fat Man".

All times the symbolism is heavy-handed parallel references to Dante's descent into the inferno are clearly indicated not only by the main protagonists' assimilation of the book at the start of the film but also by her name: Beatrice, who in the book represents the wisdom at last. At other times the symbolism is refreshingly simple, as when the two love images from the deepest stage of their journey and Marie balance on a wire saw. This can be said to signify purgatory, the place which is neither heaven nor hell.

Lambert is well cast as Barbara, offering a strong and natural performance as well as an often-worried sure of vision and keen intelligence. In investigating human nature, Deermody and the viewer are faced with images of violence, destruction, self-harm and the need to human extinction. The challenge is to face the question of survival in a world driven to self-destruction.

For Deermody "breathing under water" means learning to breathe under the suffocating presence of nuclear threat and the infinite pressure of possible extinction through forging a strong

and trusting bond between the world of your contemporaries. Her film is directed with a loving eye incorporating beautiful and compelling images of water in every form possible — light and misty reflections, waves, surf, ripples, sea-sides, bubbles and droplets — enhanced by a curious and interesting score.

Although intriguing and promising, this alternative film is not for all tastes.

SPARKING UNDER WATER Directed by Susan Murphy (Screenplay: Susan Murphy, Deermody, Director of photography: Ellen Adair, Production designer: Barbara Carls, Costume designer: Amanda Lovell, Sound: John Deermody, Title Designer: David Price, Composer: William Dean, Cast: Anna-Louise Lambert (Barbara), Kristoffer Grimes (Harriet), Steve Deermody (James), (Paragon Productions in association with Channel 4, Australian distributor: Ferns, 60 mm TriStar Australia, 1993).

BUGGY

LEAFARIS CAPUTO

There is a scene in *Buggy* which takes place in a Hollywood sound stage, and it evokes the filming of a scene between Johnny Hanneke (George Hall) and Fay Duvall (Madonna Crichton) from *Reel West: A Storybook* (1941) on the occasion Benjamin "Buggy" Siegel visited the set (in actualizing the scene from *Mapower* after having watched the scene re-enacted for the purposes of *Buggy*). It is as though one has inadvertently been let in on a secret. The scene in *Mapower* is set in a "top part" where Fay Duvall/mael, Johnny, were of her dubious past, and concerned over his best friend's privilege of marriage to her, has turned up today her off. But Fay does not take kindly to the offer, and the manager and Taylor become aware with an over-

priced drink bill in the meantime. Johnny does not take kindly to the bill, drops a coin on the bar and says "Here a little back, split it between ya." Soon enough, Johnny breaks the mirror, slams, picks up a steel and breaks it over one of the club's goons. Now armed with just the other leg, Johnny backs he way to the wall, knocking down each successive patron: the first is shocked, then another and then a third as Johnny approaches the wall. In the back ground, on the edge of frame, by the wall door, stands a young woman alarmed by the commotion and unsure of what to do. Johnny turns to her and hands her the club with the line: "Here, take this. In case I want to come back." End of scene.

The woman on the edge of frame in *Mapower* is an actor played by Virginia Hill, Hal (parade) being the other half of *Buggy*. She is rather vulgarly dressed for the occasion: is indistinguishable from any of the other actors, has no lines of dialogue and is onscreen for no more than a few seconds. She would be invisible were it not for Johnny's departing actions. Unlike Annika Barling's portrayal of her in *Buggy*, she looks something like a "plain Jane". Yet this is Virginia Hill. This is the real Virginia Hill. One says it repeatedly, half-heartedly, quizzically in disbelief, as though really the red line for *Buggy* — "Glenn was the dialogue" — is really a cold and hard fact meant to lessen the delicious excitement of the cinema, rather than a happyway out into the figure of "Buggy" Siegel.

It is a fascinating exercise to begin to read *Buggy* through the image of Virginia Hill in *Mapower* and not for any comparison with theme, narrative structure, stylistic design and

THEORY AND PRACTICE, THE OTHER IN MAPOWER AND HOW A PROTAGONIST OF BARRY LAMBERT'S STORY



asual. Rather, precisely because there is some thingness lost in *Bugsy*—midway between fiction and fact—in saying “This is the real Virginia Hill.” What is a *dis*play about seeing the image of Virginia Hill in *Manpower*, after now having experienced the re-enactment in *Bugsy*, is the half-imagined but pervasive sense that here is a woman whose thatside is being watched. This first appearance of the Virginia Hill character in *Bugsy* is like her extra’s appearance in *Manpower*, but certainly not as a prop for the soliloquy of George Raft. For the camera in *Bugsy* senses both that and the film-within-the-film.

The scene on the Hollywood sound stage opens in mid-scene between Raft (Joe Mantegna) and Dietrich (Karin Prokhorak). It is only a second or two later, when another take of the same shot begins up, that one realizes this scene is being staged for a camera. *Bugsy* (Warren Beatty) meanwhile is seated on the sideline, ostensibly intoning the dialogue with Dietrich. Raft’s half-a-buck split between ya. Here’s half-a-buck, split it between ya.” By the time Raft is backing his way to the exit, *Bugsy* has faded together the camera’s viewpoint from *Manpower* with *Bugsy*’s point-of-view as he watches Dietrich looking impressed in the filmmaking process. Then, *va-va-va*, there is the appearance of Virginia Hill within the scene staged, arrived in a long, glittering evening dress beautifully enveloped. The camera’s follow-shot of Raft watching his way out of the club becomes a shot which suddenly zooms into the figure of Virginia when Raft steps out of frame. The camera’s movement in this instance, rather than capturing a first appearance, is like an announcement, “Ladies and gentlemen... Virginia Hill.”

Saying “This is the real Virginia Hill” is for *Bugsy* (and *Bugsy*) to claim a stake in the nature of the viewing experience of film. The delicious ambivalence of the scene is not just as one would expect in a relationship of the “real” to the “half as imagined.” That as the Virginia Hill of *Bugsy* does not pretend to be the “real,” nor does the “real” challenge the imagined. *Bugsy* presents Virginia Hill from within an imagined world (a film set), stepping into its own imagined world. From this angle, glamour is not a disguise, it is a stroke. To take something off a distant but related example, there is a well-known story about the FBI secretly recording a conversation between a lady (Milla Fares) back in 1937, and in which part of the talk included her concern in whom would be asked to play her in the film *Ford Dapcello*’s 1939 *The Godfather*. (For the reader’s interest, the tapes revealed Paul Henreid as the favorite contender for the role of Don Corleone.) This suggests, at the very least, a level of self-consciousness about their own theatricality which is somewhere between identification and narcissism.

André Bazin once wrote that with the language of the cinema the Western found its true aesthetic dimension. If this assertion is an apt one, then perhaps it is just as apt that the ambivalence of the *Bugsy* results from understanding of a “condition of cinema”—what Roland Barthes termed the *photogenic*—a condition

unlike photography. *Bugsy* is often what involves a world set between two mirrors, and Warren Beatty’s *Bugsy* is like an image of himself hypothesized by Louis Lomax. *Bugsy* often sees observing himself at the closest available mirror. One of the most bizarre moments (however) is when he beats up fellow gangster Jerry Adams (Lance Van Bergen), catching himself in the mirror, *Bugsy* proceeds to tie up his hair as he simultaneously lays his head into Jerry, valuing the image of what he has been caught in the image of what he wants to be, wanting to return his image to that of a proudly movie star.

On the wider scale, *Bugsy* employs the usual imagery of the gangster film, and perhaps only in *Robert Weinstock*’s scene as a mirror’s fall—the gangster who is doomed because of the obligation to succeed. It is only on the surface that *Bugsy* is a chronicle of the factual life of Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel from the point he departs New York until his death on the West Coast. The factual here really is more prop, in a similar fashion to how the Virginia Hill scene as a prop for George Raft in *Manpower*.

But what is intriguing about the reflexive soldier in *Bugsy* is that they are never made directly to the audience (as in direct address) but through the agency of an imagined being, intoning another being. In this respect, *Bugsy* engages the audience in a reflexive mode by developing up Weinstock’s discourse on the essence of the gangster “even to himself [the gangster] as the prison of the imagination”—but through the presence of an (additional) person. Its most telling moment is in *Bugsy*’s death scene. For one thing, *Bugsy* knows he is going to be killed and his death so because of a code created by another. It is a mortal death; he takes the place of his love. It is romantic, nostalgic and it’s the stuff of movies. But, as well, when he arrives at his Los Angeles home on the night of his death, he motions as though he hears a voice calling him. There is a voice, it is his own and it is imagined. The voice is his own movie image which utters before his eyes while *Bugsy*, in a sense, witnesses his prolonged death as death bullet expeditiously breaks through his body.

In the end, it is a double image watching another movie image. The final sequence of *Bugsy* repeats the words “There are two lives here” from the book by David Thomson on Warren Beatty: one life is Warren Beatty’s; the other is that of an imagined other which possibly can be named “Warren Beatty.”

1993 Directed by Barry Levinson. Producers: Mark Johnson, Barry Levinson. Screenplay: Barry Levinson. Characters: Benjamen Siegel, James Tobias. Director of photography: Allen Davis. Production design: Dennis Gassner. Costume designer: Albert Welling. Sound: William Burton. Editor: Stu Linder. Composer: Bruce Monosson. Cast: Warren Beatty (*Bugsy*), Lance Van Bergen (*Virginia Hill*), Henry Kiefer (*Minkey Cohn*), the Kinsley (*Wayne Lawry*), Bill Graham (*Killer Joe*), Luciana (*Lucy*), Rick David (*Harry Sternberg*), Joe Mantegna (*George Raft*), Wendy Phillips (*Ellie Siegel*), Patricia Richardson (*Jackie*), Linda Van Bergen (*Jerry Adams*), Wallace Wolf Productions. Stillman Pictures. Australian distributor: Hyatt. 95 min. 138 mins. US: 1993.

NONCIDE

KARL GINN

In David Mamet’s third feature as director, regular collaborator Joe Mantegna plays New York City police detective Bobby Gold. The idea of an Italian-American actor playing a Jewish-American cop may seem a little strange—presumably even—yet the actors could well be construed as a deliberate attempt to bring ethnic-disparity weight to play in this tale of mistaken and misquipped (misidentified) identity. Like the offscreen relationship of Annette Bening and Warren Beatty epitomizes of Barry Levinson’s *Bugsy*, Mantegna’s identity serves not so much to imbue another layer of meaning, or even to contradict the obvious aim, as it does to reinforce the reading towards which the director apparently wishes to guide us.

To begin and justify the audience recognizes Mantegna the actor as non-Jewish, so Mantegna’s Gold sees himself as non-Jewish. His primary point of identification, and hence self definition, is through his (metaphorical) uniform (he is a plain-clothes detective)—first and foremost. Gold is a cop. His special function within the force is as a “negotiator,” taking dangerous characters out of potentially explosive confrontations with the police.

When the film opens, Gold and his partner Sullivan (William H. Macy, also a third-time Mamet collaborator) are on the brink of closing the long running pursuit of a black man wanted for murder. The case has become a cause célèbre with the Mayor’s office determined to ensure that it goes not proceed yet in further issue of inter-racial benevolent style violence. But when Gold identifies Jordan as a straightforward case of murder—that of an elderly Jewish woman who ran a corner store in the heart of a black neighbourhood—his vision of gray recedes. Despite his attempts to divert authority for the discovery of the murder to help unperformed

JOEY GOLD (JOE MANTGNA), AND SULLIVAN (W. H. MACY), BARRY BEATTY’S NONCIDE.



officers (in order to avoid revealing the murder placed on his doorstep). Gold is not only exiled with the press, but officially removed from the movement.

While Gold is removed from the case ostensibly to prevent him from revealing a subliminal copy to the Jewish-hunter case, it also follows him on the heels of a major confrontation with the black Deputy Mayor (Paul Butler) which degenerates into racial abuse. This scene is crucial to the development of the film's major subject: The depiction of the New York City melting pot at boiling point is clearly limited as first, on one hand, the racial hysteria of the black politician gives rise to a similarly hysterical response by Gold. On the other, the potentially explosive racial undertones of the confrontation are defused when a black cop officers' support to Gold and condemnation of the politician's pat response of race-motivated theory. In a quiet movement, Mann establishes the tensions which threaten to tear New York apart, then offers a vision of interracial harmony which might allow the city from its inherent drive to self-destruction.

Yet once Gold is displaced from this fraternity based on work rather than race, and immersed in the "liberal" world of Jewish culture his affiliations begin to come unstuck. At first sceptical of the Kluge family's claim that the old woman (their grandmother) was murdered as part of an on-going campaign of anti-Semitic terrorism, Gold is gradually seduced by a series of images — first glimpsed clues to his own identity — to the point where he no longer defines himself as a "cop" but as a " Jew."

The shift of identity on a Marxist class narrative and terrorist careers in the film, and the extremes of Gold's shifting subjectivity are explored most effectively in two scenes. In the first Gold taking to another police officer from a telephone in the Kluge's private apartment, in response to the suggestion that he should abandon what is going on because the Kluges are "his people", Gold, taking in the obvious display of wealth around the room, responds:

"Fuck them, they're not my people."

The second scene comes toward the end of the film, as the long awaited capture of the black murderer is about to be realized. Gold, having dangerously maintained his presence in the operation, is sent to be at the scene of the raid at Sun. He is central to the success of the operation, and has a further moral imperative to be there, having promised the mother of the wanted man that he would talk her son into coming without a fight — and rescue alive. Faced with anti-Semite involved in a plot of terrorism, helping destroy in his new found Jewish past whether he has been to believe in the headquarters of a neo-Nazi paramilitary organization responsible for the murder of the old woman and presumably countless others.

The film's ending is ambiguous: with Gold positioned as morally culpable for having betrayed his duty to the force as well as the black gangster's mother. Yet, in the scene which is pivotal to Gold's redemption of himself as committed Jew, we clearly see evidence of the existence of, at the very least, a collection of Nazi memorabilia. Gold's Jewishness, however, is only defined in terms of a paramilitary allegiance, for the words of Hebrew, faith and learning are still as alien to him as they were at the film's outset. He has revealed to us from his initial scenes of history self-knowledge, but only towards a political refusal self-ignorance. The final scenes of the film has another police officer handing Gold the innocent situation to the police upon which he has completely built the entire case for the old woman's murder on a sign of anti-Semitic anti-Semitism. But even as Gold is revealed as having been misled by his past, the suggestion implies that he may have been onto something.

Mann is a clever writer-director, and the play is a good deal of courage in writing much of the impetus of the narrative in Homophobia's misused clue. It is perhaps a subtle use of psychoanalytic theory which is strongly appropriate to the tale of shifting subjectivity and search for identity. But at the screening I attended during the Jewish Film Festival, many amongst the crowd in attendance complained that the story didn't make sense. That the film wasn't as good as Mann's *Heaven of Games* (1987). Perhaps the problem here was one of identification: presumably, this Jewish audience suffered no problems of cultural identification, and perhaps read the film as being specifically about Jews.

They may be right, but I think it is more fruitful in the light of recent events in New York — both on the streets and on film — to read Homophobia as an attempt to problematize the whole issue of race identification within a society perpetually ascribing to multiculturalism. The filmmaking

from the U.S. which attempts to pursue a racial mobilization — and I am thinking here of the work of Spike Lee, John Singleton and Joseph Minicucci's recent *Angels in the Flesh*, among others — seems of great importance precisely because it refuses to point at the name of identification: the advice to our liberal comrades that most American cinema does. *Homophobia* may contradict this, there is much in this strand of filmmaking, and in *Homophobia*, from which our own melting pot can learn.

ROMEO Directed by David Martin. Producers: Michael Freeman, Edward R. Pressman. Executive producer: Pat Melillo. Screenplay: David Martin. Director of photography: Roger Beaman. Production designer: Michael Martin. Costume designer: Ian Glavin. Sound: John Hobbs. Editor: Barbara Telford. Cast: Peter Onorato, Carol, Joe Mantegna (Mickey Doyle), William H. Macy (Tim Sullivan), Heidi Maltby (Clara), Ving Rhames (Montego), Patricia Richardson (Mrs. Doyle), Robert Downey Jr. (Frank), Lionel Lincoln (Alvin), Josephine (Frank), Edward F. Phoenix (Graham). Australian distributor: Hoyts. 94 min. 1991. R. 1991.

BACKSLIDING

PAUL JACKSON

Simon Target's *Backsliding* opens promisingly with a backpedal between paramilitary during which committed loner Jack Tyson (Jim Hall) who has arrived completely with police in a born again. As Jack is welcomed into the flock, there emerges a brief affair, quickly adopted as incestuous, with the younger character, and immediately the viewer is thrown off balance. Unfamiliarly Target's acceptance of this protocol and his film quickly descends a backslide of its own, emerging as a truly brutal attempt at a psychological thriller.

The term backsliding is one employed by born again Christians to describe the process of a repeat descent into sin. One of the children of God who use this term with alarming frequency are Jack, not on people and a self-proclaimed new man after his conversion, and his wife, Alison (Dakota Claring), who formed Jack at his baptism. They run a power station in remote central Australia, with only their pet goat, Lulu, and occasional visits by the flying doctor for company.

As one would expect, the literary homology of this solitary sentence is immediately disrupted by the arrival of a stranger, Tom Whelan (Tim Rook), a father who has been hired by Jack's company to work as a handyman at the station. It soon becomes clear Jack and Alison that Tom is not what he claims to be, and tracing sexual tensions among this isolated refuge is truly eventually lead to an explosion of violence, and a brutal confrontation between Jack and Tom.

One of the main flaws in this film is the manner in which the director handles the build-up of tension between the two. While it is entirely unwilling to witness a couple in outback Australia wandering about muttering impressionist images of the signs of the apocalypse, Target does enter the realm of pliancy Jack, for example, signals his observation to Tom by sitting at



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ALLISON JANNEY (left) as Helen tells her husband, the writer Jim HOLT, about her latest idea for a screenplay.

the breakfast table denouncing the violence and film that he believes permeates the local news magazine. This is straight out of American situation comedy. *Allison* appears to be as much of a believer as Jack (an her relationship with Jack she tells Tom that "What I really wanted was a man who loved me but loved God more"), but she is apparently less repressed. We know this because she seems to get along fine in bed, plays the flute and appears to be sexually aroused when Tom pours bucket-loads of water onto her. Jack, on the other hand, is annoyed by fire, and water only seems to fuel his escalating madness, as we witness in a scene where he takes a shower while listening to inspirational tapes, psyching himself up in his war against Satan.

The problem is that Jack and Allison are treated as cartoon characters by Target, assuming that we won't be surprised when they begin to accuse Tom as an inamorato of satanic. Nevertheless, the transformation from cheery fanatical to terrifying enforcer is far too abrupt and unbelievable, and Target has to rely on props, such as the *Playboy* coverlet that Tom has attached over a sign with his last name that says "God's love shines on us all," to express the underlying tension.

Revolting appears to be an attempt to replicate a theme used in another recent Australian production, Phil Meyer's *Dead Calm*. Both movies rely on a fairly well an unhappy event lurking in its past (in *Nope* a film is the death of a child, while in Target's it is the husband's

savage attack on a young man) confronting the violence brought on by the arrival of a stranger. However, on the occasion it is the husband, not the interloper, who turns out to be the only member of the party.

The film is let down badly by its script, written by Target and Hans Wilson (who is also credited as creative consultant), which fails to establish any sense of motivation among the characters apart from Jack's madness. As Allison, in *Clairo* is called upon to deliver lines such as "No more is an idiot" and "Talk can be stuff" as writer accusing Tom of being "spiritual busy." Assuredly, this is so as to clearly the right-minded way in which her church has forced her to think, but the result appears laboured and silly. Target and Wilson have also opted for some fairly obvious symbolism, such as when Jack, increasingly suspicious that Tom may be an agent of the devil, asks him not to stand in the light while he repairs the power generator. The movie also various scenes incorporating the family's pet goat, just in case we should forget, at least in Jack's increasingly deranged view of things, that the devil is about.

The three central performances don't really assist the proceedings. Jim Holt has angular, supine features which prove helpful in conveying his rapid passage into lunacy, but actually his performance is a curious hybrid between Robert Williamson's sinister psychopath preacher in Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (1954) and Jack Nicholson's manic Jack Torrance in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). He is a combination that both the Holt and Nicholson characters, who go off the rails and

stalk their wives, are named Jack. Holt fails to show any of the restraint that would be necessary in making such a difficult role even remotely convincing.

Eighteen-year-old Roth, last seen in Australian cinema in Tom Stoppard's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), turns in a totally lousy performance. At least Roth is clearly trying to be persuasive, while Roth scurries through her role, apparently confusing a look of anguished brooding with one of forced conviction. It barely takes the use of a blowtorch for Jack to galvanize Roth's character into any form of action.

Clairo in *Clairo* Allison looks utterly terrified when faced with her husband's murderous pursuit, but Target has failed to elicit any audience sympathy toward her character prior to this, so we don't really care when Jack threatens to do her in. However, to be fair, *Clairo* is seriously restricted by the aforementioned dialogue which she is required to deliver.

On the plus side, some of the camerawork is at least. Though Target's director savings between local experimental techniques and those which would be typical of most episodes of *David's* *At Risk* Police. Tom Cowan's photography adequately depicts the lovely little of a group of characters owned by their oppressive surroundings. The conflicting use of fire and water imagery is also nicely handled, until, as with so many other aspects of this film, it is overdone and eventually becomes tiresome.

Revolting turns out to really be as the case and image from other sources that it seems to have no opportunity of its own. The setting is

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**PROJECTING AUSTRALIA:
GOVERNMENT FILM SINCE 1945**

Albert Mucci: Currency Press, Sydney, 1987.
Pp.128, £6.95 (pb).

[illegible]

The profile of research subject at Deakin University scholar Robert Mares's continued association with the publication of *Projecting Australia: Government Film Since 1945* (the first book-length history and discussion of the films made by the Commonwealth government film unit) and *Yearning* (filled over 40 years, but first known as the production arm of the Australian National Film Board) than the Commonwealth Film Unit, than Film Australia (since 1986) War II. The book is published by Quayle Press (with this kind assistance of Film Australia" but it is not an in-house company history. The overall very positive evaluation offered by Mares of the work and significance of Film Australia (great credit to the Film Unit and Film Australia) confirms, for concern and recognition (value) does not come at the price of ideological celebration or lack of critical analysis. It gives enough about

which the corporation should feel quite chuffed. Having it attached to its work as an independent film hero, one of major accomplishments in the media curriculum, based on scholarship and creative contribution.

Based on Morris's PhD thesis, 'After Gonslow: The Australian Government Documentary Film Unit since 1968' (PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 1989) *Projecting Australia* is the result of extensive interviews with many of the principals in the organisation, is well-based and simply put, a brilliant text-book, and a great deal of viewing (audio – if it shows – enjoyment) of the film producer, VCR and soundtrack. The interviews range from the 24-year youngsters, Shirley Hawick (to whom the book is dedicated) to the most recent managing director, Peter Hegner and Brian Muir and include producers, directors and other major production personnel. Muir always gets the most from the oral interview research, many anecdotes and insights are included (including and of length, interesting feature reel citations) to this page.

Moran's theoretical and historical writings are always informative and challenging to the understanding. The time from the formation in 1942 of the first penitentiary of Port Australia is divided into four periods. Each period is marked primarily by changes to the overall style and style of the films (but these also varied technically or what in historiography would be called non-deterministic) with the years in Australia. It

cally, although there are organisational and personnel changes that figure in the production also. The first is a period of nation building (large visions of social justice and reform), intensive filmmaking within the still-rigid classical British documentary format, post-war reconstruction, the formation of a stable filmplace of the eighth nation, a new form (1945 to 1960).

The second, from 1954 to 1964, is a time of what Marek calls "bureaucracy", meaning that an orthodox "conservative monocultural view of Australia" (p. 100) predominated in films with a deterministic look of aage first and order thereafter. This coincides nearly with the life spans of, and represents a phase when places like Australia were becoming somewhat sclerotic. The third period, from 1964 to 1976, once Film Australia is flourishing (describing their generation both in style and content) reflecting the international influences of stylistic innovation and diversity (correlate with communication in Occident) and social life mutation. The final part, from 1976 to the present, are "hard times", with the social complexity and pluralism of the roller (period remaining but becoming into "a diverse, diverse society in itself" (p. 112). Film Australia perhaps for mobility, negotiation and a place in a rapidly-changing film

Overall, there is a fascinating grid placed over the wide field covered, with aspects of history, society, a geographical, structural and change and film style, all pieced a little together in a productive way. There is much to be, for students and teachers of film history. *Australian Hollywood*, society and government and organisations, while film and television industry people wanting to reflect on one of the central long-term production units in Australia, and the gaps and little-known media wishing to know something about one of the central repositories of Australian social history, will certainly discover the material useful.

And there in the press is food for warning: the output of Film Australia amounts more than \$100 million (in rough calculations would put the firm an order of the equivalent of between 500 and 700 tourist firms). More in the space of a short book, managers in travel & cruise as well as examples of the routine as well as the more controversial, high profile, or high-technology work of Film Australia, including among the latter *Moulin Rouge* and *Shogun*, *The Queen in Australia*, *From the Tropics to the Snow*, *The Unknown Industral Prisoner*, *Accident/Drowning Out, Core Trade An* (University of Melbourne) (Page 104)

There are perhaps three aspects which led me to write most of the book. *Demosthenic Asia*

sure to be in their full the length of Moore's original study, as it is to combine their letters to be on his critical and contextual. While the book contains a bibliography listing titles of all films and serial produced from 1948, there is no information about their availability to viewers's faculty and other purposes (such as film societies, cinema clubs and schools) and under what conditions they might be available. The book also affords another valuable appendix listing other images, photos or the principal experts of Film Australia over the years, which would have been a valuable addition to the book, giving another way into the long history covered. Also missing through consideration is some interesting history, principally about notions of censorship and innovation in documentary practice as it applies to the output of Film Australia, as well as considerable tactics relating to the initial working and over time, which is a substantial organizational analysis in its own right. For this reason, the reader's writing to their chapter will need to become the task. Through the library website,

Perhaps the most enlightening finding did, in this analysis, is attention to the modes of distribution, exhibition and reception of the films. While it is pointed out that most of the output of Film Australia has been for strictly limited purposes – training, promotion and in-house activities of the commissioning government departments, it is hard to get the big picture of how, over time, such multifarious contacts (with superordinate networks) in creating, exhibiting, releasing or otherwise influencing its audiences (if the corporation has "projected Australia", in whom has it projected it, with what resources? retail, not institutional).

The book could also have put *Film Australia* into a wider perspective, principally by comparing it more extensively to its nearest, and more famous, cousin, the National Film Board of Canada. The book falls in the previous point, is only because of the very limited distribution enjoyed by the great bulk of *Film Australia*'s work that it has suffered from a relatively low profile internationally and indeed inside Australia. Graham Oakes (like me) with the type of films made – their quality, accessibility, entertainment values, or vision – in comparison to similar organisations elsewhere? And are these questions the most pertinent ones in the light of the fundamental role *Film Australia* has played, that of servicing the needs of commissioning government departments? Like the ABC, that other government-funded audio-visual institution with a long and inevitable heritage, *Film Australia* is structurally anchored between two altogether-contrasting aspects of its mission – infusing surviving visual media apparatus, creativity and innovation in the national and international film community. On balance and over time, this is achieved all that it could? But undoubtedly, without Albert Moseley's book, these questions could only be posed on a much more slender foundation.



THE FILMS OF MERCHANT IVORY

Robert Elmslie Long Harry M. Abson Inc., New York 10017, 200pp, \$14, 95, \$7.95 pb
EEL:DMO B&T&L:LMG

"I don't do another period picture. I don't do another literary adaptation," said Merchant Ivory in 1988. That was his response to being more or less forced into making *A Room with a View* in 1986, the film which proved to be the biggest popular success for the producer-director writer team of Merchant Ivory and Paul Powell Johnson. It is curious that at the time he became unexpectedly successful, it seems to have lost some of the critical fervor it enjoyed in its earlier more ideologically days of the 1970s.

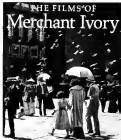
One newsday here that work is being described as too literary for decades, as if it were destined for the over-refined states of decay to which day Cape Fear would be anathema. And there is perhaps some truth in such judgments. The Merchant Ivory film depicts anomalous acts in their attention to physical detail of time and place, whether it is a case of 19th-Century Boston or Plessisville in 1907. Sometimes one feels the films dwell over their exquisite surface (and in a failed film such as *Guernsey* there is little else but these to admire) and sometimes they are so of an over-respect for their literary sources. The episodes of *A Room with a View*, for instance, actually foreground their literary origins by using the novel's chapter headings to introduce them.

However, there is no compelling reason why either a literary adaptation or a period film — or a production which combines both — should be any less relevant or exciting in contemporary terms than any other sort of film. At their best the Merchant Ivory films tackle issues of human relationships and inner-cultural conflict with a sensitivity and perceptiveness, with a cosmopolitan imagination, that enable them to bear comparison with the significant literary classics they have chosen. Robert Elmslie Long judiciously suggests that,

Comparison with [literary] classics ought not to be current law for neither Ivory nor anyone else has the steering power of James Joyce's eloquent singularity. His ability to create characters from the intimated depths of their consciousness, his Ivory [possessive] ability to enter into others' cultures with delicate and delicate discernment.

And Ivory shares it. M. Fennell's "concern with personal relationships in the context of the cultures to which the characters belong"

If they are not greatly daring as adapters Merchant Ivory are invariably intelligent, drawing heavily on Johnson's skills rather than recourse to sentimentality. Whether interventions they may have about their choice of subjects in the past decade. Long is surely right to celebrate their sensitivity as filmmakers. Few — any? — misapprehend the filmmaker here presiding so long. It is now 23 years since Ivory's first film, a documentary called *Pleasant Things and Variations* and in the face of some intelligently unimpassioned sounding enterprise. It is a remarkable sch-



lavement. Those who have come to know the Merchant Ivory film only since *Heat* and *Just the Bastards* and *A Room with a View* are certainly be aware of how surprising is the team's longevity. In the 1970s they made time out of quirky charm, wit and exploitation, but these films went on to demonstrate the appeal to filmly outside the mainstream that it is a great wonder that the team ever finds it into the 1980s at all.

And yet as Long suggests, some of their most interesting work belongs to this period when budgets are smaller than the adaptation and need for commercial success are more sparingly less urgent. Many of the films of the period are set in Merchant's native India (Ivory is American, Johnson a Polish-German Jew, married to an Indian). They include Shakespeare Made in India, the tribute to a traveling theatrical company in India, led by the father of the actresses Jennifer and Patsy Kensit, the very engaging *Bombay Talkie* which Long tells us remains "one of Ivory's own favorites despite its poor reception" and the two masterly films made with television backing, *Autobiography of a Princess* and *Hullabaloo over Georgia's and Marie's Pictures*. These latter have adapted the scripts by evoked interest in Fennell and James respectively. The former film presents an elderly Englishman (excellently played by James Mason) reflecting over tea with a Kensington-based Indian princess on his life as tutor to her (Marjorie Fennell) and the latter is reminiscent as Long notes, of such a Jamesian tale as "The Aspern Papers" in which the predatory "Book of art is terms of possession".

Personally, I would rather for these two films and Jane Austen in *Mansfield Park* as a tribute to all the better privilege-laden successes, despite the many attractions of the latter. The earlier films could not have been made by anyone else. They are ad — perhaps not cynically — original works for the screen, and the wit and pathos in them outshines anything in the novel, especially the interwoven Fennell and James. I have to acknowledge literary adaptation, not even much good to "literary cinema" as such, but the Ivory adaptations are not really

different in tone from Charles Gurdie's work for film and to inclusion of the many decently watchful BBC classic series. Autobiography and Hullabaloo are the sorts of address that they never find more than a small devoted following; that does not mean, however, that they are anything other than masterpieces. And Jane Austen in *Mansfield Park* is much an adaptation as a film adaptation, must be one of the most consistently cited films of recent years. Via Johnson, Jane Austen and Samuel Richardson, the stylish and elegant effectively captures various aspects of New York's theatrical scene. An avant-garde theatre group and the traditional theatre performed in Anne Baxter's character to her performance) via for the rights to stage Austen's childhood play based on Richardson's novel. Sir

Charles Gurdie. Without relinquishing respect for either, Ivory makes a fun of both; it is a mixture of the most under valued film of the 1980s, in its wit, elegance and feeling for its milieu.

Long is back to really not much more than a modestly collaborative of a team which has developed a distance and against the odds, made a niche for itself. It is short on critical insights there is no denying its enthusiasm for the subject. Like the David Lean book by Stephen Sondheim, it is handsomely produced and well placed, although of the film, at least on the level of an enjoyable read.

Long is shown enough in recognizing reducing the main in the film itself to Ivory, though some will wish for insights were articulated in more detailed relation to the film. It is interesting on the nature of the relationship between the brilliant Merchant and the more useful Ivory and Johnson, and the book is useful about the problems of setting up the production — about the securing of financial backing and the way in which major films from Lee Remick to *The Elephant Man* to *Valmont* to *Madame de M.* to *Baroness* and the forthcoming *Howard's End* to *Baroness* and *Woodward in Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (gradually came to trust the reaction to the team. For perhaps above all, Merchant Ivory have persistently offered remarkably detailed editing class of a kind increasingly rare in major cinema. They offer a novelistic care for the minutiae of character development. If they achieved nothing more than James Mason's eloquent study in gentle disillusion in *Autobiography of a Princess*, they would have earned their place in the story as it is there are perhaps a dozen other notable star performances and whole gallery of stagey scenes, perfectly understood character roles.

Perhaps nothing will ever make Merchant Ivory into box-office giants. Perhaps they have already gone far enough in that direction to tempt their particular excellence. As it is, it is grateful that they have been enabled to achieve so much — and to Robert Long for so lightly and modestly recording the achievement to date.

THE LOGIC OF IMAGES: ESSAYS AND CONVERSATIONS

Fritz Wenders, translated by Michael Hoffner, Peter S. Fisher. London: 1991. £14pp, pp.240 GB (pb), \$74 US (pb)

PAULINE ADAMS

Although *The Logic of Images: Essays and Conversations* was first published in 1988 in German (the English edition, translated by Michael Hoffner, was not available until late last year), discussing the complete body of Wenders' work, the book comprises letters, lectures, replies to questionnaires, essays, seminars, interviews and conversations, with photos as early as September 1971 and as late as 1988.

Wenders' words (and Hoffner's coherent and contemporary translation) provide us with the insights into and responses to his films. We sense the simplicity of expression yet the depth of ideas and a wealth of vision evoked behind his words.

On the first page Wenders describes his first impulse to paint the camera and explore deeply until the film ran out. He cites the influence of Béla Balázs' perceptive words "The ability (and the responsibility) of cinema to show things as they are [...] that cinema can rescue the estranged at things."

Wenders is a filmmaker who doesn't have a burning story which yearns to be told. He is more obsessed with presenting his capturing (and later creating) images, pictures. He describes his work as "more documenting than interpreting" yet his later films gain sophistication of ideas and focus in a development of narrative influence on his audience. Wenders becomes more sure of his material and this is reflected in his style of presentation.

Paula Tzuc is indicative of his maturity of vision, Wenders says. "From the outset, Paula Tzuc had a much straighter trajectory and a much more precise destination. And [...] it had more of a clarity than my earlier films."

Wenders frequently states "A lot of my film start off with road trips instead of scripts." The book describes in detail his going over maps, his scripts based on favourite places in Germany and the US, and his location hunts. With Paula Tzuc, for example, Wenders initially intended to travel all over the US - both for the location reconnaissance and the shoot; but his screenwriter, Sam Shepard, persuaded him otherwise, stating everything he needed could be found in Texas. "America is in an art."

What is most exquisite is his straightforward and unpretentious honesty. Sometimes the opinions or interpretations of his role are at fault. He admits to have yet to see observation on p. 4 describes that surprisingly limited anger people can have in response to a film or a scene which they don't understand. "They imagine there has to be some other [deeper] reason and when they can't find it they get mad."

The chapter entitled "Chambre 688" is about a project based on his attraction to the German film festival in 1982. Wenders set up a video camera in room 688 and invited the directors

attending the Festival individually to come to the room and switch on the video recorder and, at their leisure, leave their responses to his enquiries.

The question was along the lines of cinema being created by television culture. "It has to be thought a television who has suggested film style [...] is cinema becoming a dead language or art which is already in the process of decline?"

Wenders elicited responses from luminaries of the cinematographic scene: Luis Buñuel, Werner Herzog, Helmut Wimmer, Peter Biskind, Susan Sontag, Michael Riegg, David Siegelberg - literary directors in bed.

The best responses come from Godard, Scudamur and Penzance. Godard describes the concurrent history of film and television to put his argument, and the question is posed. Scudamur agrees "films are about people [...] When the passion goes out of cinema, then I'll start to say, just like any art form."

Penzance returns the posed question, to do most of the directors surveyed, arguing that many directors manage to make a film using television money and maintain their artistic vision without "becoming television and telly."

The most astute observation comes from Turkish filmmaker Yilmaz Guney who attempts to present his view directly to the camera as the government had demanded his extradition and his escape refuge in Canada of his place. I could think of more pleasant and less hostile places to be in being.

Guney astutely defines the cinema as having two symbolic: culture - industry and art - saying that "Art tells stories to the public, industry wants to make its profits from the storytelling."

On reading the fifteen responses to Wenders' question you find yourself agreeing with almost all of them. Each director concentrates on one aspect of the implications of the question and thus reveals some of the hot bed and place within the industry. For example, those who focus on budgets and schedules. His most interesting aspect is of the end product that the studio bossure has one with the deciding power the ones who hold the purse strings - either the filmmakers themselves. He emphasises that an-acting: deals are due to greedy executives. "They say I want to get my money back on this project, and I want it back fast!"

Wenders sets out their views but declines to offer his own comment or interpretation - again the documentary style of a recorder of history.

It would be interesting to hear more recent responses to such a question from directors like Peter Greenaway who is incorporating the technology of HiTV more and more into his films.

One brief chapter which lovingly describes the location hunt for Paula Tzuc is steeply followed by a description of the result which delayed the screening of Paula Tzuc in her own country.

The chapter on p. 68, "The Growth of a small dependency" details the lengthy litigation he has had with Fleischer de la Aere, a camera and distribution company in his struggle to attempt and delayed account of their dispute. Wenders highlights the manipulations of this company's alleged exploitative dealings and broadens his argument to accuse Fleischer of destroying the New German Cinema. "In the courts at last" in Wenders' closing words to the distributors' triumphant yell "On the screen at last" - as if they weren't to blame for the delay.

It is a fascinating chapter which highlights the other more ugly side in marketing the production tactics and the results. It covers a stage in the battle, over three months until early 1989, and ends on the ominous note "The dispute is as yet unresolved." I would have liked an auxiliary chapter with the details at next stage of the proceedings. Surely with the book being published three years later that would have been feasible.

There is almost a child-like ingenueness in his discovery based approach to the experience of filmmaking. It is fascinating to see the basic filmmaking lessons learnt as Wenders progresses from his film.

In the chapter on *Der Schindlerhof* (Schindlerhof) (The Gentle Lady), he expresses concern with the relative nature of his subject matter in reaction to the imposed limit line is yearning for total freedom.

Thus the next chapter concentrates on the making of *Im Land der Zeit* (King of the Road) - what the impulse to make an unscripted, clearly free-form film, to the location hunt through to the complete scene of the shoot, how, at first the key people, the producers (Rutger Wiger and Hans Zoffen), the camera operator Wenders and his assistant would be up all night - often until dawn - waiting for the next day's shooting schedule, how sometimes they would appear on the set with no idea what would bring towards at the schedule for that day, how Wenders, and the team, found this process draining and exhausting.

There is most illuminating about this chapter is the lesson learnt by Wenders how film ideas require money. That a lack of organization, planning and skill to achieve the logistical application of the idea leads to loss of money. "Normally when you're filming you want to waste that idea every price tag." This hard lesson is applied in varying degrees, to his later projects, though perhaps not to the final of the World



the footing of which are 14 months' unvarnished wit.

Does the adoption of unvarnished freedom to the effect of *King of the Road* necessarily mean a compromise in elegant organisation? Judging from her words there appears to be no clear division.

In the following chapter, Wenders writes, "After my last film [...], I left the working world in the cold transmission of a story provided by someone else." Small wonder his approach to cinematography following this, *Der Amerikanische Freund* (*The American Friend*), is more structured, solid and carefully laid.

Unfortunately in some instances, we are reminded the context of the extracts, such as the final chapter "Le Saut du Fauve" (left for us to

decipher as "The Death of the Angel"). Almost a summary of the book, the chapter testifies (in aspects of each film) to their chronological order.

Throughout the book there are hints when Wenders gives examples to make his explanations, and because they are out of context, it is difficult to interpret their meaning. Apart from the occasional ironic observation, *The Logic of Images* is an enjoyable book offering a vividly personal and humane understanding of Wenders' ideas and passions, and their bearing on his film.

Those who are seeking to adopt an academic or semantic approach to analysing Wenders' films may be disappointed by the straightforward simplicity of expression – even be mislead by a lack of complexity of ideas.

BOOKS RECEIVED

COMPILED BY RAFFAELLE DRIVOTO AND SCOTT BURNETT

MY LIFE WITH GROUCHO: A SON'S EYE VIEW

Arthur Meyer. Pan Books, London, 1997. 344 pp.
pb, np \$12.95

Not a book if you want a heavy dosage of the comic genius of Groucho, but it is still appreciative of his talent. This biography is largely anecdotal and contains mostly on matters of their family life. It is not as detailed as one might expect though there is some good personal insight into the relationship between the three brothers when off camera. It is a book that is warm and sentimental, and makes good as a light read.

GARBO ON GARBO

Sven Gorman. Bloomsbury, London, 1997, 199 pp., hb, np £29.95

HUMPHREY BOGART: TAKE IT LIKE IT

Jennifer Cox. Bloomsbury, London, 1997, 199 pp., hb, np £29.95

THE BIRTH OF MARILYN: THE LOST PHOTOGRAPHS OF HOLLY HUNTER BY JOSEPH JACQUE

Jeanine Siskel. Signet, A Jackson, Canada, 1997, 143 pp., hb, np £29.95

These books are mostly reliable for the candid photographs of three of Hollywood's renowned stars. The written texts are typically lacking of intriguing material, but are not without a few charming reminiscences and amusing anecdotes. Of the three, Siskel on Hunter is the one which organises its material most lovingly. But, ultimately, the reputation always trumps the lightness on this score, all three are commendable.

CORPORATE SCRIPTWRITING: A PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE

Ray Gidycz. Focal Press, Boston-London, 1992, 207 pp., pb, np \$75

CREATING SPECIAL EFFECTS FOR TV AND VIDEO

Bernard Wilkin. Focal Press, Boston-London, 1991, 194 pp., pb, np \$49

DIRECTING THE DOCUMENTARY

Michael Reager. Focal Press, Boston-London, 1992, 362 pp., pb, np \$75

A DIRECTOR'S METHOD FOR FILM AND TELEVISION

Don Richards. Focal Press, Boston-London, 1992, 297 pp., pb, np \$55

Another selection of how to publications by Focal Press which clearly point to students and would be professionals of visual media. These books are highly readable, and do not merely stick out elementary information; the authors provide a sound essential background that takes the reader chronologically through the mechanics of each field. There is always a detailed explanation of technical terms throughout, and an abundance of useful facts based on experience.

THE VIDEO MAKER'S HANDBOOK

Robert Lane. Pan Books, London, 1997, 204 pp., hb, np £29.95

A guide to the basic techniques of video production tailored for amateur and home video enthusiasts. Explains some of the essentials of visual filmmaking: continuity, shot sizes and types; served as a definite on how best to apply the lessons in certain situations – like a wedding, or family gathering etc. Already soundbited where the film beginning with video as a hobby.

GINGO

Mark Rosenzweig. Currency Press, Sydney, 1992, 72 pp., pb, np \$14.95

SPOTSWOOD

Mia Dorn and Andrew Knight. Currency Press, Sydney, 1992, 88 pp., pb, np \$14.95

The screenplays of two recent Australian features, modestly successful if not modestly produced. Brief usage are included by the directors as well as by the contributors, which survey the script development. Absolutism are principal cast and crew credits. Most important,

though, is some detail on the divergences from the scripts to the progression to the screen. It is

VAIETY MOVIE GUIDE

Derek Elley (ed.). Harvill, London, 1997, 704 pp., hb, np £24.95

The one value of this book as it represents, in an elegantly shortened form, the original *Variety* reviews of 5,000 of the 65,000 films reviewed since 1914. Being *Variety* naturally most of these films are American and, with few exceptions, the inappropriately terse brief reviews have a preference for Hollywood movies made over all else.

In the small part on p. vi, editor Derek Elley writes "the selection has been limited to films made in the English language". This is incorrect (for one, Sergio Leone's *Come un elefante a Parigi*, which was shot with Italians speaking Italian, Spanish, French, et al, is included) and gives hint of the many problems to come. The selection of *Variety* films is equally puzzling: no *Book The Naked Eye* or *Prod*, though the book is said to include 1994.

Elley doubts the value of sourcing selected writers of the time of a film's release in "to restore the bare of film writing, involved again". None while his approach has some merit for historical reasons (but only if reviews were printed in full), it is ultimately annoying. Why should the critical ignorances of the past be so lovingly regurgitated?

Take an example dear to this author's heart: Robert Rosenzweig's *GINGO* (1994). The condensed *Variety* review opens with a silly and inaccurate plot synopsis (a common problem here). The anonymous reviewer then staggers through some inept criticism of the "because I don't understand it, it must be bad" school (no help from some Australian newspaper reviewer). He/she also adopts *Variety*'s annoying habit of using actor names when character ones are required: Vincent (Warner-Bazely) "falsely/barely telling in love with Jean Seberg". A film character in love with a real woman? Very post-modern.

An annoying is the slipshod found in most areas. One is, the book states that the film *Ginga* grew here in the "original title in country of origin". Quite untrue. *Variety*'s *Ginga* of *Persepolis* in *Andromeda* (1994), for one, while made in Italy is rendered only as *Democritus* (France). Also, many English (and Australian) titles are misspelled. The little too can be sloppy, as in the review *Maratón* where George Miller is described as a lawyer.

In every important sense, this is a very disappointing book. Look elsewhere. ■

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Technic

EDITORIAL

In 1986, I was lucky enough to interview the now legendary Colorfilm laboratory liaison Bill Gooley (*Cinema Papers*, No. 50, pp. 50-55, 86). Bill died of cancer later that year and I guess we both knew that the interview was being conducted within a black border. One of the statements that seemed too emotion-laden to print at the time was about how he sometimes cried over his love for the physical nature of film – the laboratory smells as the film came from the drier and even the way that it burnt your hands when winding the reels. There was a presence, a solidity to the image format.

That physical quality of the film image now seems to be heading for a collision of a more ephemeral, digital one, and it may be that the clapper-loaders and the laboratory technicians (and maybe the telecine operator) will be the only people who will touch the film as an object – at least until the theatre projectionist joins the reels of release print onto the continuous platen for screening.

There will be some losses, things we will have to accept, because it appears that it will be faster and more cost-efficient to use the various methods of video and digital editing and neg matching than handling work-print. And in this world where time and money are king, one of our tasks as technical journalists is to make sure that the king is really putting on a grand new suit of clothes and won't be left standing naked in the parade. Dominic Case's article on the work-print is our first contribution. The subject is sure to be followed up in future issues.

FRED HARDEN

Never mind

1 High Definition Television has been on the agenda for all of the 1980s in the time we have seen waves of technology come and go in the production sphere: one-inch tape, component, composite, digital, interlaced, anamorphic, VCRs of various formats, the compact disc. Somewhere High Definition is always just around the corner. What is the hold up?

Cost is one very good answer. Even in the big spending fields there was a reluctance to embark on such an expensive and all-encompassing revolution. Differences among gender hold up has been the debate over standards. Which system? From what was once seen as an opportunity for the world to rid itself of the great PAL/NTSC dichotomy, the years of High Definition development have led to the growing certainty that there will be not one, not two, but probably three different systems established – and those in addition to the existing broadcast systems.

In a lavish presentation at the Australian Film Television & Radio School in March, Philips and BTR presented their case – the European approach – not just of the technology of high definition, but to the applications of satellite, Pay TV and interactive video. This was a truly multi-media event: television monitors of all shapes and sizes, a videowall, slides, multi-track audio, a light show, and top machines set the stage for a well-presented strategy.

In the recession-bound 1980s, Philips offers a rationalist viewpoint. High definition is still a goal, but one it is to be achieved gradually, in several stages: first one less period, and some more profitable. As the last of the system has not yet been set in place of television transmission technologies, the MAG family.

The last chapter Australia could be closed off with Pay TV. Countries that already have Pay TV operate it in a variety of ways: terrestrial, cable or satellite, transmission, single or competing networks, owned by or separate from the conventional channels. Australia is currently a fast adopter of innovations, and Philips believes its system could be 'launched by Christmas'. The

calities

and the quality, feel the width



PHOTO: THE WALL, A VIDEO INFORMATION SYSTEM WITH TWO 20" MONITORS BY 1994

signal would be broadcast by satellite using D3-MAC and with an encryption system that would require the viewer to use a "smart-card" in the receiver.

D3-MAC is an analogue system that offers some improvements over PAL. In particular, it eliminates the "Moire" effect of alternating striped shots, but it is still compatible with PAL. With a special tuner connected to a 35cm disk, the signal can be viewed on today's television sets. Better, it can be viewed on wide screen sets. And the new set will still be able to receive PAL signals from

the existing infrastructure, without cropping top and bottom or black-lining the sides of the screen.

So, there's the rub. The most significant change we will see will be in the shape of the screen. Of course, a Pay TV network needs a selling point and a screen for the shape of the movie sounds like a good one.

"By the year 2000 most viewers will still be watching terrestrial television on PAL."

Meanwhile, the stage is set for the next step: high-definition production facilities, producing programmes to be broadcast in HD-MAC. This

1280 line wide-screen system will deliver much-improved picture quality on larger, wide-screen receivers equipped for high definition, but will also be viewable, with the appropriate tuner, on existing sets. These will only deliver 625 lines of course, giving pictures of the same standard as today.

Thirteen BTS high-definition cameras covered the Winter Olympics at Albertville, supported by a rapidly developing range of production gadgets such as slow motion, motion-still, teletext receivers. The Barcelona Olympics will follow. Philips expects regular high-definition transmissions by 1994. But it predicts that even by the year 2000 most viewers will still be watching terrestrial television on PAL.

Is this the way television will develop? If so we can look forward to a long transition period with a number of formats and systems abound ing. The huge stock of movies and television series that broadcasters mutually own — in part — to fill the inevitably greater number of channels will be quite esoteric in the relaxed definition environment. The greatest stride forward for most viewers — this decade — will not be the definition, but the width of the image.

A footnote: Above and beyond all present and proposed high-definition analogue television systems, but already in the side of the horizon is the next stage: all-digital television systems. At least one speaker on the night referred to digital as "a good hope for a single unified world standard for television" —

2

"Digital" has emerged as the definitive buzz word in technology marketing for nearly a long time. But what does a digital system really deliver? This question was posed — and answered — recently in Sydney when Colly presented the Australian branch of his digital sound system for the cinema, Colly's SPS-D.

Colly's is not the first. Kodak and Optical Radiation Corporation have been promoting their system (ODS), and Sony recently announced



POSTERED TO IT: WITH THE DIGITAL SYSTEM, THE PROJECTOR NEEDS NO FILM.

Each pulch of data between two parts contains an identity both of a second's worth of sound, encoded into a "frame-word puzzle" pattern of binary data. Thanks to data compression techniques, the bits are much larger than those on the Kodak system, making pointer and projector sound focus and print damage much less critical. There is even room for a representation of the Dolby "double D" logo between every perforation. Because every part carries both digital and analogue tracks, the projector can automatically switch over to the analogue track if there is a problem in the digital one.

During mixing, the output is fed into a computer which digitizes the signal and records it onto a magnetic optical disk. Typically, one disk would carry sound for one spot. The sound camera (Dolby has modified a Vestax) captures both a conventional analogue track and the short-boarded digital signal in one pass.

What does this mean for sound recording and mixing? To take full advantage of the system, techniques will need to change. Typically, at present, dialogue is recorded in mono and played in the centre channel, while music is recorded in stereo. Now it is suggested that dialogue can be successfully placed anywhere in the theatre, and music should be recorded in stereo. Naturally, Dolby recommends recording and mixing using SR noise reduction throughout.

The different characteristics of analogue and digital channel separation, as well as different dynamics, suggest that slightly different mixes would be needed for the two tracks, and, at screens a mix down for television would be even more necessary than six channels thus from four. Inevitably, this means a longer time for mixing.

The projector is to use the full 3-dimensional sound image, will be a strong one. Off-screen dialogue could emerge from any corner of the room. This opens up new options – and constraints – in picture editing and audio direction as well, as the soundtrack gains a new mobility previously reserved for camera and editing departments.

Dolby hopes to see a major release using their system in May or June, but will suggest a title at this stage. Will their system succeed? Like Philips and the Eureka TV project, Dolby faces the struggle of selling higher quality to an audience often (and rightly) more concerned with content than technologies. Like Philips, it has chosen the simple revolutionary approach, "but with the old – it with the new", in favour of more cautious backward-compatible stages, and that puts the onus back onto the programme – or filmmakers. If the product warrants the technology, you have it. If not, why change? ■

The Workprint: An Enigma

Of secondary hands claim to remember the days when workprints were supplied with a green stripe down the middle to make sure they couldn't be used for a final screening. Now that really was in the old days. Times have changed, and they are changing even faster now.

The move towards video editing, accelerated by non-linear systems such as Avid and Touchstone, has seen a lot of first-hand editing machines packed off to the auction room. And these days it's hard to find an editor, wherever the preference, who isn't equally adept with film or video editing.

One consequence of this change is, of course, the rise of the "work print", rapidly becoming an endangered species. Unfortunates find more and more of their production work is "travel only" with the processed negative sent straight to be printed for theatre. Peter White at Atlanta makes that sorry tale thick of its film negative is sometimes direct to tape, with 35mm not included. Two years ago, only 20 per cent went this way; the great majority of negative was work-printed.

If we continue to follow the US, trends (which seem to have been fairly accurate in these matters) we can look forward to no different 15 per cent of 15mm negative going to workprint within a year, and about 20 per cent of 35mm footage.

The debate over the relative merits of editing on film or tape has continued for some years, and with increasing familiarity it seems that the pros and cons of these differences are diminishing, and the argument is largely an economic one. But first attention has been given to the fall out in other areas. How does the lack of a workprint affect the rest of the players?

There is an immediate effect in the lab. Peter Wilentz expects to see a reduction in staff numbers on the night shift, which is when most negative processing and printing is done. It might go further. "We could see one of the major tape houses, like Agfa-Veritas, putting in its own negative processor, to pick up all the commercial footage." Eventually (and that isn't very far off) Wilentz sees laboratory services splitting to two simple functions: developing others' negative film, and printing bulk release prints for theatrical distribution.

So, if there's no workprint, what goes after the print to test? Usually a VHS tape from the television market. Producer Michael Mann found that when *Heatstroke* was shot last year, and admits that it was a big mistake. "The quality of the rushes has a significant effect on the morale of the crew," he said. "By the end of the first week of shooting, there was no one at machine speed again; the director and the DOP. The rest of the crew couldn't see any value in it." He says that it is important to get back into the quality upon a big screen, "so that everyone can feel they're

prints as well.

Do we need it? Two thirds of cinema sound the world will operate in mono, half of the rest rise to the reproduction standards required. But a well-mixed Dolby SR track played in a well-balanced theatre does give very impressive sound. With the Dolby encoding system delivering not two but four channels of stereo and a dynamic range of up to 80 dB, the need to find a theatre quiet enough to test the limits of a conventional soundtrack.

Dolby is demonstrating showed exactly where the improvements were. A clap of thunder rumbled and echoed around the theatre, and then five people, all talking at once, could be pinpointed in the four corners of the room and in corners centre, making it easy to concentrate on one person's speech.

How quiet was the quiet bit? I don't know. All I could hear was a conversation going on in the projection booth. Distraction? You need good ears to hear an analogue track. But the separation, now there was a real improvement.

Conventional analogue stereo soundtracks running alongside the image, carry four channels encoded into two tracks. On replay, they are split out again to left, centre, right and surround channels. But the tracks never separate completely, resulting in a surround that lagsged stereo image with the surround track noticeably poor in the higher frequencies. As Dolby points out, these are minor complaints – analogue tracks have become very good over the past 15 years – but they could still sound better.

After trying various parts of the film, including the transition, Dolby has placed the new digital soundtrack in between the perforations alongside the analogue track. Six months after cuts have apparently shown this to be the area of film that gets least damage on projectors.

The digital track consists of six discrete sound channels (left, centre, right, left surround, right surround and sub-bass) stored as a data track for theatre automation control. The need heard on the projector is placed – at present – before the gate, in the path before the film, but it's likely to finish up adjacent to the analogue track head. Digital techniques allow the track to be delayed if necessary to obtain correct synchronisation.

involved in a professional production" in his words. Broken-Highway, however, will be color-gamut-lapse quality, with a decent video processor — and, interestingly, there will be a work-print on film about a week.

On the other hand, Mason does see an advantage in video rushes for the cost. "A lot of actors aren't worried. They don't want to see their rushes anyway. But those who do take the tape early to their own room and study their performance."

However, cinematographers have always looked to the work-print as the best measure of their work. Australia is almost unique in providing one-light (compressed) work-prints for most feature productions. Cinematographers used to the Australian system can judge their exposures and lighting from the print, relying on absolute day-to-day consistency from the lab. For most cinematographers, the day can't start properly until the overnight report has come through from the lab, and the question of "how do your days rushes look?" is settled.

For most, the real bailing is quite unnecessary. The one-light work-print system has led to just one only work because of the superb standards of cinematography that we have in Australia. In the same way, it's DOP has a good relationship with the laboratory, then a phone or telex report is quite enough to get away until the work-print arrives.

But what if there is a no-work-print? Technically, the lab has viewed all work-prints prior to sending them out and written a comprehensive report on every roll. Many problems only show up on film, which can then be cross-matched with the negative to identify the cause. It simply is impossible to inspect the negative alone and get the same amount of information. Problems of focus, exposure — even emulsion scratches or negative dirt — can't be seen. Some telecine houses now provide a written report by the telecine operator or telecine operator, but it's much harder to relate any problems to the negative that way.

How does the tape-editing approach affect the budget? Richard Mascia's answer is very straightforward. "With work print costs, I've been licensed on 16mm. If I edit on tape, I can afford to shoot on 35mm. And that eliminates the only way for a lot of low-budget producers to get a film into the cinema."

Grand Miller at Cinema agrees. Although he takes a slightly reduction of the amount of production that go to work print, he feels that the lab will not be seriously affected. "If they're not work-printing, often they can shoot more film that outlasts the effect for an". As the majority of television drama producers in Melbourne, the labs there have been accustomed to "develop only" work for some time.

However, Miller does see a definite shift in laboratory services to meet the new trends. Drivers to now equipped for negative processing

THE FEATURE OF THE FUTURE

Now, don't become the labe, but in the not-too-distant future it will take longer and longer to get your rushes back for

viewing. Well, that's actually not true, but that's what it will seem like in comparison to the length of time spent editing. In fact, you will be able to see the day's edit before viewing the day's rushes, due to the possibility of desktop non-linear editing systems and location digitizing video-tape systems with time-code origination on film.

The following is a possible scenario for a feature film shoot in the not-too-distant future.

You would be using a Minicomputer which generates time code on every film frame. You would be taking an entire roll of the footage around from the D&T and digitally recording it all with the images from the color video-assist onto optical disks. As the sound and music are digitized in sync, you will spend less time syncing the rushes and this will speed up the first mixing process because they will all comply instant code. Because you are also logging takes onto the computer on location, this will act as a database of all your source material allowing instant access.

The possibility of the desktop non-linear system will see it used on location in a trailer or hotel room, providing easy access for the director and producer.

With this method, I would estimate a first edit to picture lock-off stage completed approximately three weeks after the final wrap.

How far is the "not-too-distant future"?

Without having to do more than the minimum crystal ball gazing, the "future" is within the next eighteen months to two years. A better indication is where the technology is at the moment.

The Cinema Action and Arliss have both developed cameras with time-code capability. The

STEPHEN F. SMITH
BRASSING DIRECTOR
FALCONER & CO. (AUST) PTY LTD

differences are in how they record the time code.

Desktop non-linear editing (Asimilized)

In our previous piece, the best cameramen at the moment are the Avid and the Lightworks. I believe the Avid has the edge because of its on-line use of optical disks and the 24-track CD quality sound for track laying.

D&T: Why don't you develop D&T without time code is beyond me! It seems that their media people don't talk to the video people. You can now get DATs with time-code ability on portable recorders.

Video Assist (Digitizing) Real-time digitizing onto optical disks directly onto within the non-linear systems. On the Lightworks, you digitize onto the hard drive and transfer files to the optical. The Avid can read the optical disk on the tape storage. Both systems can digitize directly from any video source without a video tap. But instead of tying up the computer you will be using for editing, a more cost effective method is now available. Video Assist PAL offers the service of recording the output onto S-VHS and then digitizing the tape image. There is certain to be editor resistance to the lack of quality of the video tap for editing. Video Assist will certainly be forced to improve.

Electronic Clapper Boards: The Genesis Microdisc slate will generate its own code and also give you to an external source (e.g. the camera). It also has the ability to generate time code to a recorder mounted with the sound recorder. Pilot it is a hand-held computer (available from Lamsa) which allows you to set time-of-day code as

well as enter scene and take information.

As you can see there are a few gaps which need to be filled before we are ready to shoot the "Feature of the Future", but size, cost and quality are all factors that have always improved over time.



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to a video edit, and, while most people will be resistant to covering rushes, they will be able to view on the computer negative-masking program, logging the negative before it goes out of the lab.

At Melbourne, recently moved from Perth into the Film Australia facilities in Sydney, Karen Crumpton believes there is another way. "Workprint is the cheaper way to go. Producers often find there are hidden costs in tape editing and dailies — for example, on-tape edit costs often make it more expensive than film." Crumpton found that telecine costs made her job unviable in Perth and the Sydney operation will be uncompromisingly oriented towards traditional film work prints. He will offer a competitively priced develop and workprint service, provided without a night shift. "Quality is important, and you can't get that on night shift. People simply aren't at their best in the middle of the night. We won't work past midnight, but we'll start pretty early. Customers will get their print only a couple of hours later than normal."

Behind the technical veneer of the 1970s, there were half a dozen labs in Sydney alone. That was in the days of the mythical gaucho-printed rushes. Now it seems that the lab of the workprint may well determine the ultimate fate of the lab.

Briefly

Missed from last issue were a few notes. The first was that Stephen Smith was allowed to (steal) over the Postscripts column so that he could hear that film on the Lightwaves. Others anxious to reply to Stephen's concerns about that episode in the December place. You will have judged by now if the questions were answered. That kind of dialogue helps us all.

The other was a missing caption (I promised Ivan Johnston, who asked about the CineKinet 1000), that I'd mention that he was a partner in the Melbourne company Kinograph.

Time and Tide wait for no person and, joining the band to acquiring films we are every day for soap powder and hair-brush selling companies, there's the name for Melbourne's newest AHD-based shop: The Non Linear Company. Chris Weil and Ian Wilson have the latest Mac-based system strategically placed within travelling distance of AHD at 175 Bank Street, South Melbourne (tel. 03 696 0313).

Even closer to the computer is John Lennard and Barry Minto, who will have taken delivery of their Lightwaves system long before you read this. They are set up as "sell advice" at POS(T) at 18 Kavanagh Street, South Melbourne (tel. 03 698 5080). Happy listening customers!

Boris Smith won a long needed piece for Larry Wilkins and Colin Gardner at Acme Photo Video's (which, if I understood it, was to tell us that Acme's new video suite was open for business

It doesn't say that he has even been writing on the wall for Larry a film opticals suite, but it's keeps him around as an independent opticals house (and it's easy to mention that two SP Datacom four Ampex 17 machines, ADD 0600, ACE editor — Clayton H043, Premier 7001, Ampex 4150 colour equipped) suite is open for business at 11 Herbert Street, St. Leonards (tel. 02 436 2163).

I watched the VHS tape for Mastercast with an agency creative director and it was interesting to see her positive response to the format. Alan Radwin and Ken St. Clair (who directed the short talking head equivalent) have done us with what is basically a "moving Stillcast" on tape. For a very reasonable \$108 an editor can have a short head and shoulder framed picture (not essential for motion) in a format of choices that are circulated to people making posting decisions across the television and advertising industry. Not as good as a proper screen test, but certainly better than a still head shot and length designer. (Not just letterboxing more full length short films (which, etc.)

The concept succeeded with the short shorts of the late 1970s (the thing that Mastercast is now intended). It is (being) based only at the moment. There is a bigger issue in the background that could prove controversial (judging from one of the testimonial letters in the press release supplied. One of the bigger agency artists agency welcomes Mastercast for "nearly circumventing the ever-present and projected ceiling agency". As a producer, I've heard that my local actors before.

He followed the attempts at on-line distribution of articles and may be that we will have to wait for the next step: on-line retail with CD-ROM version which could surely be produced for the cost of the current print-based materials. For the moment, a fast forward scan on a Mastercast VHS tape they find the best you are looking for.

The Mastercast Group is at 3rd Floor, 258 Clarence Street, Sydney (tel. 02 264 3488).

BASF is calling for entries to a joint BASF and LASCAP competition for a video mastered production about children on the theme, "Children of the world: finding their basic needs" in a press release which tells us that they have already "sought all possible sources of talent" (if in any way it is un-learned (and might ask), BASF calls for broadcast-quality programmes produced after January 1992 that you think (might fit the theme). The international competition has a US \$15,000 prize and competition entries close on 31 May 1991. For more details contact BASF in Melbourne on 03 212 1508.

On the subject of computers, Keith Macdonald at Animal Logo in Sydney sent along its latest with a press release. It has taken over the VHS Sydney facilities and hardware (Perry, Peltel, Iliac, Silicon Graphics computers, etc.) and is

producing some terrific "morphing" work, the current advertising led by the computer-generated changes of the creature in Persim for 2. Judgment Day. I knew "Technimorph" is trying to keep a "M" initial, but I found a lot of the staff (and members) excited to see help coming in Australia. It has made some commitments to some new hardware and software, but of wider film interest is the purchase of a Kodak film recorder which will allow Animal Logo to put the high-resolution 32 computer images onto film. There are now five Kodak machines already in Australia and they are used at Location in the U.S. and Hollywood. Animal Logo has the software expertise to make its do some short films. It could think a few more in special effects in the local cinema.

While you are sitting there in the dark, spend a thought for dirty movies. Film clip on projected prints will be true if the dirty stuff that you will miss in the future at the 75 Greater Union Cinemas across the country. We have mentioned the elegantly clever Kodak Perma Transfer Roller (PTR) in previous issues. It is a cheap polyester roller that rolls across the film surface and can pick-up 90 per cent of dust particles as small as 10 microns. At the end of the day, you just wash them out (using water). Filabits Engineering designed the four-roller assembly specially for GU and Graham Gold, GUAT cinema system manager, said he was excited about the first test of the PTR installed at the new multiplex in Adelaide. He pointed out that "The dust content of a new building is high for quite some time after opening. The amount of dirt that came off the print before the test screening was amazing." Besides enhancing the movie going experience, the dustier prints should save costs by lasting longer.

Alan Kodak was the winner of Kodak's sixth Oscar for technical innovation. On 2 March this year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences gave its Award of Merit for the development of T-Omen ammonia technology in the new 6500 range of Eastman colour negative film.

Two retired Kodak employees, Dr Fred Kolo, Jr., and Paul Paul, also received a technical achievement award for the development of the SMTS 89-90 test film that is used to test projected image quality on theatrical screens. The test film has been in use for almost twenty years.

The previous list of Oscars and technical achievement awards that Kodak has received covers a full page of the press release, but if you are interested to know the list, look in 1990-91 for high-speed black-and-white camera film.

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TENEBRICOSE TEN

A PANEL OF TEN FILM REVIEWERS HAS RATED A SELECTION OF THE LATEST RELEASES ON A SCALE OF 0 TO 10, THE LATTER BEING THE OPTIMUM RATING (A DASH MEANS NOT SEEN). THE CRITICS ARE: BILL COLLINS (CHANNEL 5); THE DAILY MIRROR, SYDNEY; SANDRA HALL (THE BULLETIN, SYDNEY); JOHN HARRIS (FROM THE RECENTLY CLOSED-DOWN THE AGE/LADE NEWS); IAN HUTCHINGS (SEVEN NETWORKS); ARNOLD-SON, MELBOURNE; STAN JAMES (THE AGE/LADE ADVERTISER); NIGL JILLYTT (THE AGE); ADRIAN MARTIN (BUSINESS REVIEW WEEKLY, MELBOURNE); "BORRST", JEN; TOM RYAN (JED, THE BARRON F AGE, MELBOURNE); DAVID STRATTON (NARCITY, SBS, SYDNEY); AND IAN WILLIAMS (THE AUSTRALIAN, SYDNEY)

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|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|----------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| BLACK POND Bruce Beresford | 8 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 1 | - | 9 | 5 | 7.2 |
| BURST Barry Levinson | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6.4 |
| DEAR ADAM Kenneth Branagh | 6 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 4.8 |
| DELGATESSEN Josef/Wassan/Jeanne Miro Caro | 8 | 9 | - | 10 | - | 8 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7.5 |
| DIFFERENT HOURS Michael Cimino | 8 | 2 | - | 5 | 4 | 2 | - | 3 | 7 | - | 3.8 |
| EUROPA EUROPA Agnieszka Holland | - | 5 | - | 6 | - | 8 | - | 7 | 8 | - | 7.2 |
| THE FAMINE WITHIN Katherine Dunlop | 8 | 4 | - | 7 | - | 2 | - | 2 | - | 4 | 4.5 |
| FATHER OF THE BRIDE Charles Shyer | - | - | 5 | 7 | 7 | - | 8 | 8 | 5 | - | 5.8 |
| FRANKIE & JOHNNY Barry Marshall | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 4 | - | - | 8 | 7 | 5 | 6.5 |
| FREELACK Geoff Murphy | 8 | - | 5 | 1 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 3.8 |
| FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFE Jan Aron | 8 | - | - | 8 | - | 7 | - | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6.5 |
| THE GOOD WOMAN OF BANGKOK Dennis O'Rourke | - | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 5 | - | 5.1 |
| HEARTS OF DARKNESS Foa Jaku | 9 | 9 | - | 9 | - | 8 | 2 | 8 | 8 | - | 7.4 |
| HOMICIDE David Mamet | - | 7 | - | - | - | 5 | - | 7 | 8 | 7 | 6.5 |
| JOURNEY OF HOPE Karen Robby | - | 5 | - | 6 | - | 6 | - | 7 | 6 | - | 6.4 |
| MEDICINE MAN John McTearman | 8 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 2 | - | - | 7 | - | 4.4 |
| MY PRIVATE IRONDUE Que van Stan | 9 | 7 | - | 6 | - | 6 | - | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6.8 |
| PRINCE OF TIDES Barbara Sternheim | 6 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 8 | - | 5 | 6 | 5.7 |
| RAMBLING ROSE Martin Coughlin | 9 | 9 | - | 7 | - | 8 | 5 | 7 | 6 | - | 7.5 |
| RONALD & JULIETTE Colleen Sermon | - | 6 | - | 6 | - | 8 | - | 7 | 8 | - | 7.1 |
| SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS Walt Disney | - | - | 8 | 9 | 7 | - | - | 8 | 10 | 10 | 8.1 |
| TOTO LE HEROINE Jane Van Dommard | 9 | 7 | - | 8 | 7 | 1 | - | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| TRIAL, HARDY, DEEPLY Anthony Minghella | 9 | 7 | - | 8 | - | 7 | - | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7.1 |
| TURTLE BEACH Stephen Wallace | - | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 3.1 |
| WHORE Ken Russell | - | 4 | - | 5 | - | 1 | - | 5 | 5 | - | 2.8 |
| YOUNG SOUL BEPHELS Isaac Julien | - | 6 | - | 5 | - | 6 | 1 | 7 | 5 | - | 6.6 |



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